BBC

BE×BOY COMICS

# この世異聞 其ノ弐

KONOYO IBUN KONOYO IBUN KONOYO IBUN KONOYO IBUN KONOYO IBUN KO

鈴木ツタ

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AKIO YAMANE, ABOUT TO SUCCUMB TO THE DARK FATE THAT HAS DOGGED HIS FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS, WAS SAVED BY SETSU, A GUARDIAN THAT HAS BEEN PROTECTING THE FAMILY FOR ABOUT JUST AS LONG. DESPITE THEIR INITIAL INABILITY TO GET ALONG, SOMETHING AKIN TO LOVE HAS BEGUN TO BLOSSOM BETWEEN MAN AND GUARDIAN. FIND OUT A PART OF SETSU'S PAST IN THE SECOND VOLUME OF THIS VASTLY POPULAR SERIES.

## Suzuki Tsuta

This is me traversing the Great Wall of China in the summer of 2001. As you can see, it took everything outta me. (That said, I shall now withdraw myself from the rest of the world.)

KONOYO IBUN
⋮
TSUTA SUZUKI
鈴木ツタ

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この世界は四
第三幕

Ah-
SQUELCH
——
Ah!
phwip

YOU KNOW...
YOU REALLY OUGHTA PUT MORE FLESH ONTO THOSE BONES OF YOURS...
...
...

CAUSE IF NOT THE NEXT WE DO IT, I MIGHT END UP BREAKIN SOMETHING YOU DON'T WANT THAT, DO YOU?
..YOU'RE ONE TO TALK I DON'T SEE YOU HOLDING BACK
THANKS TO YOUR TENDER LOVING CARE MY BACK'S ALWAYS SORE
AND I CAN'T FEEL A THING WITH IT
Heh
YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO TAKE THAT BACK?
COS IT SOUNDS TO ME LIKE YOU'RE WANTIN MORE
I'M NOT EVEN GONNA PRETEND THAT I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BABBLING ABOUT
..MAN I DON'T THINK I'M EVEN UP FOR A SHOWER THINK I'M JUST GONNA CALL IT A NIGHT
Are I you sure?

MAN... EVEN THE NIGHTS ARE HOT
DO ME A FAVOR AND OPEN THE WINDOW, WOULD JA?
YEAH... YEAH...
TALK ABOUT UNSEXY.
And come to think of it, it's still a weeknight
Ah, this breeze feels nice...
YOU KNOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN BUGGIN' ME BUT WHY CAN'T ANY STARS BE SEEN HERE?
I MEAN THE MOST I'VE EVER SEEN IS ONLY A PATHETIC ONE OR TWO.
WELL, THE NIGHT SKY IN THIS AREA IS RATHER BRIGHT I HEARD
IF YOU HEAD DEEPER INTO THE COUNTRY-SIDE YOU'LL SEE 'EM.

WELL THIS BLOWS
I CAN'T STAND NIGHTS LIKE THIS
?
WELL NO ONE ASKED YOU TO LOOK AT IT
SETSU..
AREN'T YOU BEAT? DON'T YOU WANNA SLEEP?
WHAT?
YOU SETTING A LITTLE LONELY OVER THERE OR SOMETHIN?
W-WHO SAID?!
ROYALLY PISSED
Heh Heh Heh
FINE, DON'T COME THEN' AND DON'T LEMME CATCH YOU ANYWHERE NEAR ME IN THE MORNING EITHER OR I'LL SQUASH YOUR BLOODY HEAD!
GOOD NIGHT!

...!
YOU CALL THIS
BRIGHT?

A NIGHT WHERE THE STARS WHICH GOVERN OVER FATE CAN'T BE SEEN.
I'VE GOT A BAD FEELIN' 'BOUT THIS.
IT'S LIKE SOMETHIN'S CHASIN' US DOWN...

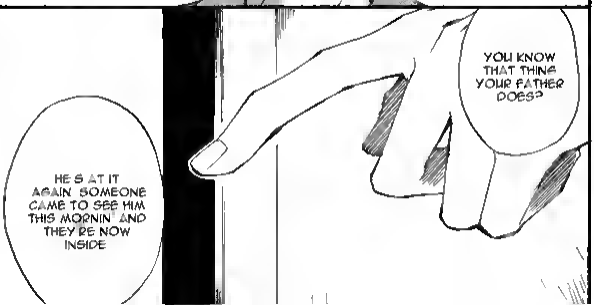
I SEEM TO RECALL THE ONE TIME I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE

AS IF TO SAY THAT THERE'S NO SAVIN' YOU AT ALL.

HOW LONG AGO WAS IT EXACTLY...?
..RA.
SHINRA..
HEY, SHINR..!

ARE YOU ALREADY UP OR ARE YOU STILL SLEEPING?
...STILL SLEEPIN'...

EH?
SHH!
YOU COULD'VE SAID SOMETHING IF YOU'RE ALREADY UP
YOU'RE SUCH A LIAR


HE'S AT IT AGAIN. SOMEONE CAME TO SEE HIM THIS MORNIN' AND THEY'RE NOW INSIDE
YOU KNOW THAT THING YOUR FATHER DOES?

WHOA!
OOOH!
THIS IS JUST LIKE THEY SAID!
I can't believe my ears!
AH, WHO CARES ANYWAY?
HEY, WHAT SAY YOU, ME AND SIS HEAD ON OVER TO THE MARKET? I HEARD THEY'RE SELLING SOME GREAT STUFF THERE TODAY
JUST COUNT ME OUT
I REALLY DON'T GET IT
WHAT'S SO EFFIN' GREAT ABOUT BEING ABLE TO REPAIR PLATES AND POTTERIES ANYWAY?
HUH?
B-BUT WHY?!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "WHY"?
WHAT IF SOMETHIN HAPPENS TO KOTA?

WELL, EVEN IF KOTA HIMSELF MAY NOT THINK MUCH OF HIS SKILL
OTHERS DO
SPLASH
TO THEM HE IS A MIRACLE WORKER WHO CAN REPAIR ALMOST ANYTHIN
I'VE TOLD HIM TIME AND AGAIN THAT HE DIDN'T HAVE TO ACTUALLY DO IT IN FRONT OF AN AUDIENCE
BUT HE SAYS THAT'LL LOWER HIS CHANCES OF BEIN' ABLE TO COME ACROSS GREAT PIECES OF ART AND JUST REFUSES TO LISTEN

DURING MOTHER'S FUNERAL THREE YEARS AGO, I UNINTENTIONALLY BROKE ONE OF THE PARLOR'S DECORATIONS
THERE ARE SOME BITTER RIVALS OUT THERE LOOKIN TO SHUT DOWN HIS BUSINESS FOR GOOD EVEN AS WE SPEAK
EVEN SO HE CONTINUES WHAT HE DOES DISCREETLY AND STILL MANAGES TO THRIVE. I THINK THAT IN ITSELF IS PRETTY AMAZIN

BUT THERE WERE WITNESSES TO THE EVENT AND BEFORE LONG, WORD ABOUT DAD'S ABILITY BEGAN SPREADING LIKE WILDFIRE.
AND DAD, IN WHAT SEEMED LIKE JUST A SECOND OR SO, SORT OF FIXED IT WITH SOME WEIRD POWER HE HAS.
BUT ONE DAY, A RICH COLLECTOR CAME ponging SOME SORT OF RARE DISH
DAD TRIED TO DENY THE RUMORS AT FIRST.

I GUESS YOU CAN SAY THAT DAD WAS SO MOVED BY ITS BEAUTY AND INTRICACY...
SPEAK OF THE DEVIL...
--THAT HE BEGAN OFFICIALLY ACCEPTING WORK COMMISSIONS, AND ABOUT HALF A YEAR LATER...
...SHINRA ENTERED OUR LIVES.
...LOOKS LIKE HE'S DONE FOR THE DAY.
SLIDE
SHINRA IT SEEMS DAD'S BEEN CALLING HIM THAT EVER SINCE THEY WERE LITTLE...

HEY, SHINRA!
AND IT SEEMS THEY GO WAY BACK WITH EACH OTHER
YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO WHAT MY NEXT JOB IS. IT'S THIS TENMOKU BOWL RUMORED TO BE SO BEAUTIFUL, GAZING AT IT IS LIKE GAZING AT A DREAM—
—AH! KOJI DIDN'T SEE YOU THERE
pt-tt-tt
OH REALLY? MY BAD
AND IT'S COS OF YOU AND YOUR JOBS THAT SHINRA HARDLY EVER GETS TO PLAY WITH US!
SO HOW DID WORK GO?
HAHA. SHINRA, LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE PRETTY POPULAR WITH MY KIDS
AH, IT WENT FINE!

I CAN TOTALLY SEE WHAT YOU'RE UP TO!
Startle
BUT EH HEH YOU SEE I GOT INVITED TO HIS MANOR FOR THIS NEXT JOB...
...AND I'M KIND OF WORRIED ABOUT THE KIDS WHILE I'M AWAY...
Aura of a fool
What? Kek, not you too!
B-BUT WHY?
WHAT ARE YOU, AN IDIOT? BLOODY SAY "NO"!
DAD, YOU PLANNING ON BECOMING A FREAK SHOW OR SOMETHING?!
Sigh
TELL YOU WHAT WE'LL DO IT THIS WAY WHEN THE GUY COMES FOR YOU, DON'T YOU COME BARGIN OUT PRETTY AS YOU PLEASE
I'LL DEAL WITH HIM INSTEAD
AND RIGHT NOW, THIS OLD FRIEND OF DAD'S..
But, but I wanted so much to see that bowl...
Eh...?
If you dare set foot outside, I'm gonna go on a kitchen strike. You hear me, Dad? That means no dinner for you!
(Well, not that I'm any good at it either...)
...IS BEING COMPLETELY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF.

I'VE TOLD YOU TIME AND AGAIN IT'S DANGEROUS TO LEAVE HIM BY HIMSELF!
THIS SUCKS
LET'S HAVE KOTA COME AS WELL...
EEEEH?
DO WE HAVE TO?
I'LL GO CALL SIS!
HEY, THERE'S STILL TIME, SHINRA. LET'S GO TO THE MARKETPLACE!

I'M BACK, SIS!
AH, KOJI
SO DID YOU ASK? WILL HE COME?

HE SAYS HE'S COMING, BUT NOT WITHOUT DAD
WHAT WITH OUR OLD MAN'S PENCHANT FOR GETTING HIMSELF INTO TROUBLE AND ALL...
OH. I SEE...
DAD. DAD. DAD. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT DAD. WITH HIM AROUND, ALL SHINRA'LL WORRY ABOUT IS HIM.
I REALLY WISH HE'D SPARE A THOUGHT FOR US ONCE IN A WHILE
Rrrrr
AND IT WOULDN'T HURT DAD TO DO THE SAME EITHER.
Here're your clogs.
Thanks.
QUIT WORRYING ABOUT IT
WELL, I HAVE LOTS OF THINGS I WANNA ASK SHINRA THAT I DON'T NEED DAD HEARING ABOUT.
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FEELING WELL EVER SINCE WE MOVED HERE HAVE YOU?
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE OK? YOU SEEM TO BE GETTING PALER AND PALER THESE DAYS.
I'M FINE DON'T WORRY

COME LET'S GO.
IT'S NOTHING, REALLY
I DON'T WANT THE OTHERS TO WORRY SO DON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT IT OK?
..YEAH
MURMUR
MURMUR

WOW, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THE CROWD?
grab
DON'T BE WANDERING OFF ON YOUR OWN NOW, DAD.
GOSH, WHERE'D YOUR SENSE OF DANGER GO?
Tch
HE STOLE THE LINE RIGHT OUTTA MY MOUTH!
chuckle
HE'S GROWN UP SOME, HASN'T HE?
YES. IT'S LIKE YOU CAN'T TELL WHO'S THE PARENT AND WHO'S THE CHILD ANYMORE.
EXACTLY
Gee... I wonder what that is.
Hey! Are you even listening? You're just asking to be spanked, ya know!

SAY, SHINPA WOULD YOU MIND KEEPING ME COMPANY FOR A LITTLE WHILE?
I PROMISE WE'LL KEEP MY FATHER WITHIN SIGHT.
THAT'S FINE BY ME.
DO YOU SEE ANYTHIN' YOU'D LIKE?
Are you sure you wouldn't prefer somethin' like a hairpin or a comb or somethin like that?
How about this doohickey? It's cheap.

HEY ICHIKA DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS IS ABOUT?
..I THINK MAYBE HE'S SELLING LOVE CHARMS AND THE LIKE?
?
HEY, THIS PIECE OF PAPER IS FOLDED INTO THE SHAPE OF A PERSON. WHY IS THERE A RED STRING WOUND OVER IT TWICE, I WONDER?
PUT THAT DOWN, WILL YAP IT'S GIVIN' ME THE CREEPS.
IT'S MORE THAN THAT. YOU KNOW WHAT I SELL ARE ALL STRONGER STUFF
I HAVE SPELLS AND "EXTRA SPECIAL BLESSINGS" TOO
©IN THE MISTS CBE

I SPECIALIZE IN SPELLS AND INCANTATIONS
IF YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL REQUESTS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK AND I'LL MAKE 'EM
NO, NO, THANK YOU
I'M AFRAID I'M NOT VERY INTERESTED IN THIS SORT OF THING
THAT SO? THAT'S TOO BAD THEN
ARE YOU SURE THOUGH? I GUARANTEE YOU MY SPELLS ARE POWERFUL.
I'M LIVING PROOF OF THAT. I'VE BEEN CURSED MANY TIMES IN THE PAST AND LOOK AT ME. I MANAGED TO SURVIVE AND LIVE ON

SORRY, BUT WE HAVE NO INTEREST AT ALL IN WHAT YOU'RE SELLIN'
COME ON, LET'S GET OUTTA HERE ICHIKA
Ah, wait!
CHUCK!!
WHAT A SHAME IT IS. WHAT A SHAME IT REALLY IS
YEAH, BUT SOMETHIN TELLS ME..
MANY OF THOSE AROUND YOU WEREN'T AS LUCKY

YOU WEREN'T EVEN THE SLIGHTEST BIT INTERESTED BACK THERE THOUGH?
I MEAN, DON'T YOU HAVE SOMEONE YOU'RE INTERESTED IN?

NOPE.
WELL, MORE LIKE I'VE BRUSHED ALL THAT KIND OF THINKIN' ASIDE.

YOU'RE BAFFLING. YOU KNOW THAT?
EVEN YOUR APPEARANCE IS STRANGE
DON'T YOU EVEN HAVE ONE PERSON YOU WISH TO MAKE HAPPY?

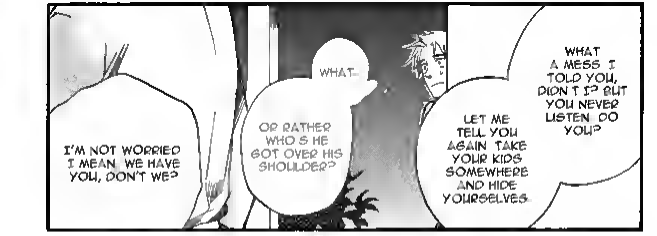
WELL...

IF THERE S SOMEONE I GUESS IT D HAVE TO BE KOTA
I MEAN REIN BORN WITH THAT KIND OF POWER COULDN T HAVE BEEN EASY
AND I DON T KNOW EXACTLY HOW MUCH ALL THOSE WHO CARED ABOUT HIM IN THE PAST HAVE GONE THROUGH TO HELP HIM BUILD A LIFE FOR HIMSELF .
WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT ALL I CAN DO NOW IS WATCH AFTER YOU ALL IN PLACE OF YOUR LATE MOTHER

AND WHAT IF I WERE TO SAY THAT'S EXACTLY THE CASE?
YOU SAY VERY STRANGE THINGS, YOU KNOW?
YOU TALK AS IF YOU KNOW MY FATHER FROM HIS YOUTH AND YET YOU ALMOST LOOK ONLY HALF HIS AGE.
HM...
consider
NO, I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S TRUE

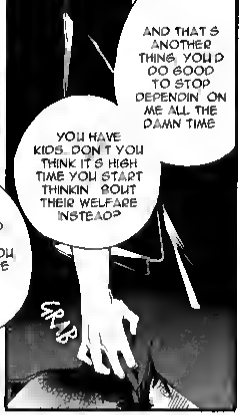
WHO IS HE TRYING TO FOOL? SILLY SILLY MAN
ARE THOSE VOICES I HEAR?
IT S PRETTY LATE TO STILL BE UP
I GET IT I GET IT ALREADY

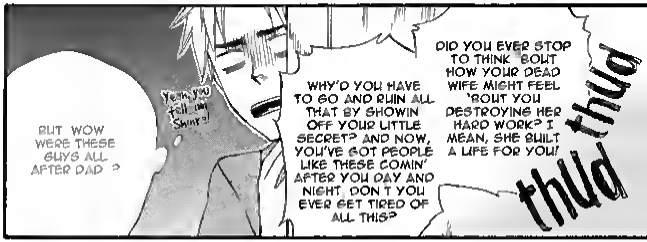
NO. YOU DON'T "GET IT"! YOU DON'T GET ANYTHING AT ALL!
THE LEAST YOU CAN DO IS SAY YOU'RE SORRY, YOU KNOW? YOU CAN STILL DO THAT, CAN'T YOU?
UH.. F-FINE. I.. I'M SORRY ALL RIGHT?
HEY, ISN'T THAT DAD AND
AND SHINRA?


WHAT A MESS. I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I? BUT YOU NEVER LISTEN, DO YOU?
LET ME TELL YOU AGAIN. TAKE YOUR KIDS SOMEWHERE AND HIDE YOURSELVES.
WHAT...
OR RATHER WHO'S HE GOT OVER HIS SHOULDER?
I'M NOT WORRIED. I MEAN, WE HAVE YOU, DON'T WE?

RUSTLE
WHA—?
DID I JUST SEE HIM SINGLE-HANDEDLY PITCH THE GUY OVER?
..AND WHY ARE ALL THESE GUYS FALLEN OVER?!

NOW LOOK HERE, YOU..
BUT LIKE I SAID WE HAVE YOU AND LOOK AT YOU YOU RE.. YOU RE PRACTICALLY INVINCIBLE!


YOU HAVE KIDS. DON'T YOU THINK IT'S HIGH TIME YOU START THINKIN' BOUT THEIR WELFARE INSTEAD?
AND THAT'S ANOTHER THING. YOU'D DO GOOD TO STOP DEPENDIN' ON ME ALL THE DAMN TIME
SRIP


BUT WOW WERE THESE GUYS ALL AFTER DAD ?
You're not gonna tell me Shinra?
WHY'D YOU HAVE TO GO AND RUIN ALL THAT BY SHOWIN OFF YOUR LITTLE SECRET? AND NOW, YOU'VE GOT PEOPLE LIKE THESE COMIN' AFTER YOU DAY AND NIGHT. DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF ALL THIS?
DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK 'BOUT HOW YOUR DEAD WIFE MIGHT FEEL 'BOUT YOU DESTROYING HER HARD WORK? I MEAN, SHE BUILT A LIFE FOR YOU!
thUd thUd

THAT CAN'T HAPPEN B-BANSHOU WOULDN'T DO THAT
I TAKE ONE WRONG STEP, ONE, AND I'LL END UP MAKIN' YOU ALL MY FOOD INSTEAD DO YOU EVEN GET WHAT I'M SAYIN'?
AND "INVINCIBLE" YOU SAID? FUNNY YOU SHOULD MENTION THAT 'CAUSE I'M SO FAR AWAY FROM BEING "INVINCIBLE" IT'S NOT EVEN FUNNY

HUH YOU MAKE IT SOUND SO EASY, DON'T YOU? DON'T ACT LIKE YOU KNOW IT SO WELL.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW LONG IT TOOK ME TO TAME THAT WILD ANIMAL?
WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT? I THINK I'M LOST
YOUR LIVES COULD HAVE BEEN SO EASY. YOU KNOW? IF ONLY YOU HAD JUST SHUT UP AND KEPT YOUR POWERS UNKNOWN
YOU CAN JUST COME RIGHT OUT AND SAY IT. DON'T WORRY. I WON'T GET MAD AT YOU.
EH..?
shuffle
THE REAL REASON YOU'RE DOIN ALL THIS, I MEAN.
IT'S ALL JUST TO SEE ME AGAIN, AM I RIGHT?

MAKE YOUR POWER KNOWN THROUGH WORD OF MOUTH AND WATCH THE MAYHEM SPREAD SOONER OR LATER YOU KNOW I'D COME RUNNIN'
Ha-Ha-Ha
Ha-Ha-Ha
W-WAIT A MINUTE ARE THEY TELLING ME...?
SHIT DAD YOU KNEW THIS WOULD HAPPEN? NO...I DON'T BELIEVE IT NOT EVEN YOU CAN BE THIS MUCH OF AN ID!
—
BUT... BUT I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU FOR SO LONG!
DOH! MAYDAY! MAYDAY! FIRST-DEGREE IDIOT SIGHTED AT 12 O'CLOCK!
GAWK
You... you...

GRAB
I HAVE NO WORDS FOR YOU JUST BECAUSE OF THAT, YOU THREW EVERYTHIN YOU HAD TO CALL A LIFE AWAY?! THAT'S A NEW LEVEL OF STUPIDITY EVEN FOR YOU!
H-HEY!
D-DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY YOU WOULDN'T GET ANGRY?!
Go ahead and deck him if you'd like!
W-WE'RE REALLY SORRY, SHINRA! I HAD NO IDEA DAD COULD BE THIS STUPID.
.. HUH?

HUH DID YOU HEAR THAT? YOUR SON SAYS I CAN BEAT YOU UP
?!
STARE
...
...
...Uh...
SHINO...? IS THAT YOU?
Eep! He saw!
STARE

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THIS WORLD THAT WE LIVE IN - SOME LIKE IT AND OTHERS DON'T - AS FOR ME, WELL LET'S JUST SAY I NEITHER LIKE NOR DESPISE IT.
IT ALL STARTED WITH A SINGLE ENCOUNTER.
A PREDESTINED ENCOUNTER THAT NO AMOUNT OF AVOIDANCE COULD HOLD OUT AGAINST
AND IT WAS THAT SINGLE ENCOUNTER THAT CHANGED MY LIFE FOREVER
IT'S STRANGE...
ALL BECAUSE I CAME ACROSS SOMETHING NO MAN WAS EVER MEANT TO HAVE COME ACROSS

...THIS PERSON IN FRONT OF ME DOESN'T FEEL AT ALL LIKE THE SHINRA I KNOW.
THERE WERE TIMES I WAS NEARLY OVERCOME BY THIS BEAST
OKAY I THINK HE S
IT HAS A NAME, BY THE WAY IT'S CALLED BANSHOU.
AND AS TIME PASSED, OUR SOULS BEGAN MERGING—
—UNTIL WE ESSENTIALLY BEC ME ONE. THIS BEAST ND I.
...SERIOUSLY SCARING ME NOW.

DID I JUST DREAM EVERYTHING UP?
IF I DID IT'S ONE HELL OF A DREAM. DOESN'T FEEL LIKE ONE THOUGH
And I need to go fix up some breakfast
..WHAT HAPPENED?
Huh?
...
REALLY, I'M OKAY.
...I'M JUST NOT FEELING UP TO ANYTHING MUCH TODAY
!
WHY? IS SOMETHING WRONG? ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL?
I'M FINE I'D LIKE TO BE LEFT ALONE
SIS!
HEY SIS YOU ALL RIGHT IN THERE? IT'S KIND OF LATE TO STILL BE SLEEPING

ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T EVEN NEED BREAKFAST?
I MEAN YOU WENT WITHOUT DINNER YESTERDAY AS WELL.
. NO I'M NOT HUNGRY.
I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO WASTE YOUR EFFORTS.
NO DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT AT ALL.
BUT YOU KNOW... ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO SKIP? COS SHINRA'S GONNA BE WAKING UP SOON AND ALL.
CAN WE PLEASE NOT TALK ABOUT HIM?
...
patter
patter
patter
. ALL RIGHT I GET IT. I'M SORRY I PUSHED
jawdropdown
!
...
flinch

...
MUNCH
MUNCH
cold sweat
UGH
I DON'T THINK I CAN STAND THIS HEAVY ATMOSPHERE MUCH LONGER
...
EVER HEARD OF DIY? IT MEANS DO IT YOURSELF!
KOJI.. I'D LIKE ANOTHER...

BY THE WAY WHAT'S WITH ICHIK—
THERE'S NOTHING "WITH" HER.
WHY'D IS THERE SOMETHING "WITH" HER THAT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT?
GLARE
N-NO, T-THERE'S NOTHING
OH. IS THAT SO?
STAB
...
WHAT'S UP WITH THE KID?
DID YOU DO SOMETHING?
Can I have seconds?
Are you a wiper?
HUH? YOU MEAN IT WASN'T YOU?
WHAT THE HELL? SOMETHING STINKS.

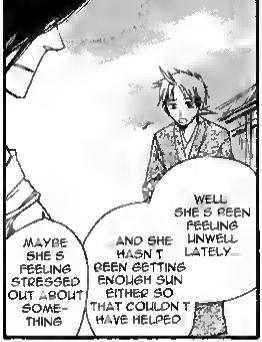
EH?
accusing stare
How
EH? YOU TALKING ABOUT ME?
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WASHED THAT FILTHY THING?
OH THIS? UH IT WAS..
..UH WHEN WAS IT AGAIN?
Hmm..
WHATEVER MAKE SURE YOU WASH IT TODAY YOURSELF
I MEAN IT
IT STINKS LIKE HOLY HELL.
Sniffer Sniffer
3rd points
AND YOU TOO OLD MAN. BETTER GET SOME REAL WORK DONE TODAY
And by "work," I don't mean these exhibitions of yours. You do it anyway and I'll sink you to the bottom of the nearest river
YOU D DO THAT TO YOUR OLD MAN?!
EH?!
IS THAT THING EVEN WASHABLE? THAT FUR LOOKS KIND OF TRICKY..
Fine, fine, I hear ya.
I'll be by the stove if any of you CUTIFIED CUTIES need me
ACTUALLY NO I CAN'T EXACTLY "WASH" THIS GUY HERE

HUH. SO I DIDN'T DREAM IT ALL UP AFTER ALL.
SIGH
I'M THE ONE IN CONTROL NOW.
—BUT IF I LET HIM LOOSE, WELL. IT'S NOT GOING TO BE PRETTY.
DIDN'T I ALREADY TELL YOU YESTERDAY?
HE'S GOT A NAME AND IT'S CALLED BANSHOU.
SNIFF
SNIFF
AND ANYWAY, I DON'T THINK HE SMELLS AT ALL.
WHY DID I EVER THINK HE WAS SCARY?!
...ARE YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO SIS? MAYBE YOU'VE SAID SOMETHING AND JUST DON'T KNOW IT.

I KNOW WE RE REST FRIENDS AND ALL, BUT DON'T THINK I WON'T BEAT YOU UP IF YOU DID SOMETHING TO MY DAUGHTER
Hey..
HEY I REALLY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HER
I SAID I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!
What is with you people all of a sudden?
"I GUARANTEE YOU MY SPELLS ARE POWERFUL."
"IF YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL REQUESTS ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS ASK AND I'LL MAKE 'EM."
THAT CHARM SELLER
I WONDER IF HE S STILL AROUND
I VE ALWAYS KNOWN THERE ISN'T ANY WAY HE D FEEL THE SAME WAY TOWARDS ME
SO WHY DO I STILL FEEL SO LISTLESS?

EVEN IF IT ALL AMOUNTS TO NOTHING...
JUST MAKING A WISH WON'T HARM ANYTHING WILL IT?
BUT STILL, I DON'T FEEL TOO GOOD ABOUT THIS
SHINRA

WHAT? SOMETHING I CAN HELP YOU WITH?
HAVE YOU SEEN SIS AROUND?
NOPE. HAVEN'T SEEN HER AT ALL
GOT ANYTHING YOU NEED ME TO WASH?
Rats, is he still crying over that?


MAYBE SHE'S FEELING STRESSED OUT ABOUT SOMETHING
AND SHE HASN'T BEEN GETTING ENOUGH SUN EITHER SO THAT COULDN'T HAVE HELPED
WELL SHE'S BEEN FEELING UNWELL LATELY...

HM...BUT WHERE COULD SHE HAVE WANDERED OFF TO I WONDER?
AND SHE SEEMED LETHARGIC THIS MORNING TOO
WHAT IS SHE FEELING SICK AGAIN OR SOMETHING?

IF THAT'S SO THEN WOULDN'T IT BE A GOOD THING THAT SHE'S OUT AND ABOUT? THE WEATHER LOOKS GOOD TODAY.
Hajime you need anything I warned, hurry up and bring it over.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT...BUT STILL...
No thanks You look like you'll ruin it instead of washing it

Look over there!
CHATTER
How much can I drink?
Never here!
No, thanks.
CHATTER
Just buy it already, will ya?!

THE CHARM SELLER DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AROUND EITHER I SUPPOSE I SHOULD PROBABLY JUST GIVE UP AND GO HOME
cough!
I DON'T REMEMBER IT BEING SO DUSTY WHEN I WAS HERE YESTERDAY

I'VE BEEN LEAVING ALL THE HOUSE-WORK ON KOJI..
COME TO THINK OF IT ALL I COULD CARE ABOUT THESE DAYS IS SHINRA
patter
patter
Sigh

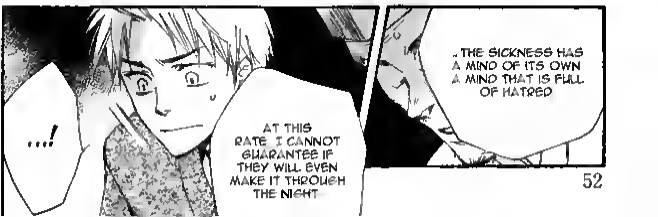
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE MARRIED OR ANYTHING
WHAT AM I? AN OBSESSED GIRLFRIEND?
SHOULDN'T I WISH FOR MY FAMILY'S HAPPINESS AND HEALTH INSTEAD?

This man.
Severed. His lifeline has been.
Bad... this is bad...
Ah, there he is!
Rumble
A new bearer!
There!
That child!
We see her!
Do. She must.
Curse her?
Sick. Is her heart.
Yes?
Weak. She is.
Dead
Dead!
No! Not...
What to do?
This curse!
Curse you!!
Vanish. Will it?
No! Vanish. It shall not!
Our hatred must be sated!
Curse you!!
Curse you to death!

TOPPLE
YES, SHE WILL HAVE TO DO!
GASP
...
...

WE'll curse the blood of this child for all eternity!!
?
WHAT'S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?
SHINKAI

DAD
DAD AND SIS THEY
THEY
THEY SUDDENLY THREW UP BLOOD AND COLLAPSED!
THIS IS DIFFICULT INDEED
IT'S AS IF


..THE SICKNESS HAS A MIND OF ITS OWN A MIND THAT IS FULL OF HATRED
AT THIS RATE, I CANNOT GUARANTEE IF THEY WILL EVEN MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT
...!

HOW CAN THIS BE?!
THEY WERE BOTH FINE THIS MORNING!
SEEMS THE OLD MAN CAME RUNNING AFTER THE GIRL COLLAPSED..
..ONLY TO KEEL OVER RIGHT NEXT TO HER
IF THIS ISN'T AN EPIDEMIC THEN IT MUST BE A CURSE
BUT KOJI SEEMS FINE
OH, THAT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE HE'S ADOPTED
Ah I see.
SO THAT'S HOW HE ESCAPED WHILE HIS FOLKS SUFFER
HOW LUCKY FOR HIM
BANG
Yikes!
!
WAS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
DID YOU SEE OR HEAR ANYTHING?
—NO
N—
AH..
Gah!
There's no way to prove a good samaritan isn't hiding all the money you have, you know!

RIGHT WHEN THE GIRL FELL.
THE CHARM SELLER NEARBY DID TOO. ONLY HE DIED AND IT LOOKED LIKE HE DID SO PEACE-FULLY TOO
EITHER WAY IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE AN EPIDEMIC.
..FUCK
GODDAMN THAT IDIOT!
SNIP

KOJI!
YOU HOLDING UP ALL RIGHT THERE?

WHERE'S THE DOC?
HE LEFT SAYING THERE WASN'T ANYTHING ELSE HE COULD DO.
SAID TO CALL IF THERE'RE ANY CHANGES..
TCH
DAMN. THAT'S COLD.

EVERYONE'S SAYING THAT THIS IS TOO STRANGE. THAT THEY'RE CURSED.
WHY COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN ME INSTEAD?
THAT WAY IT WOULD'VE JUST BEEN ME ALONE.
WHY--WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE THEM?

THEY'RE SUCH GOOD PEOPLE.
DRIP
DRIP
TAKING ME IN AND RAISING ME AS IF I'M ONE OF THEIR OWN. THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO DESERVE THIS.
THEY DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO DESERVE THIS AT ALL.
YOU ARE ONE OF THEIR OWN
AT LEAST, IT SEEMED THAT WAY TO ME
I mean, I for one, didn't notice anything that'd indicate otherwise.

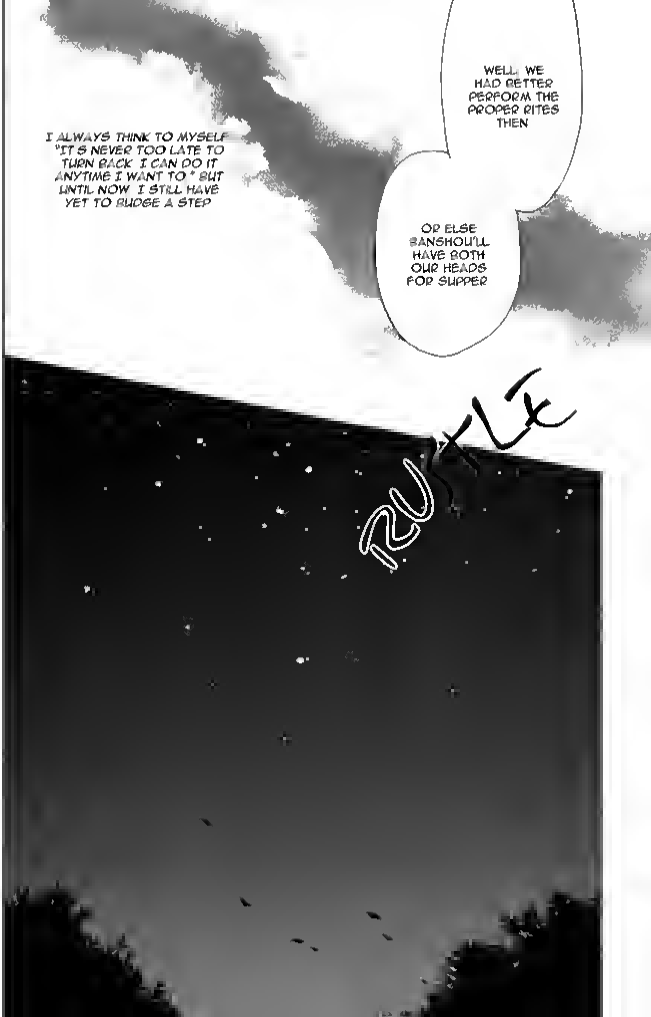
CRYING WON'T CHANGE ANYTHING
KOJI...
—WHAT IF—
...I WERE TO SAY THAT I CAN HELP THEM?
I HAVE WITHIN ME A POWER THAT NO MAN SHOULD HAVE
IT'S SO MUCH THAT I'M HARDLY EVEN HUMAN NOW. SO IF I WERE TO SHED MY SKIN NOW...
WOULD YOU DO ME THE HONOR OF NOT LOOKING AWAY?

MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT THEY WERE JINXED BY A TERRIBLE CURSE, BUT IT'S MORE CIRCUMSTANTIAL THAN PERSONAL.
MEANING IT DOESN'T HAVE ANY REAL ORIGIN.
SO MY GUESS IS THAT IF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING CONSUMES THEIR SICKNESS, THEIR BODIES WILL GRADUALLY HEAL. I CAN DO THIS
HOWEVER I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE IF THIS IS ONE OF THOSE CURSES THAT CARRY FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT
BUT IF IT IS THEN SO WILL I AND LET IT BECOME MY DESTINY
WOULD YOU GRANT ME..
THE HONOR OF IT?

A-ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT WITH IT?
I-I UNDERSTAND YOU KNOW? I KNOW IT'S NOT GOING TO BE A PAINLESS JOB FAR FROM IT IN FACT AND
.. AND IT'S YOUR POWER AND YOURS TO USE AS YOU PLEASE. SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO. YOU REALLY DON'T ..
IS WHAT I WANT TO SAY ..

.. BUT ..
.. THERE'S NO ONE ELSE I CAN TURN TO FOR HELP ..

THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT—
THEN WATCH ME AND SEE WITH YOUR EYES.
AS I SHED MY HUMANITY ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT HOLD ON TO ALL THAT'S INSIDE
I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE YOU AS A MEMBER OF THEIR BLOOD-LINE.
—WHAT LIES AHEAD NOW THAT I'VE GAINED SUCH POWER?
AS I RENOUNCE MY NAME AS A MAN, IT SHALL BE YOU WHO WILL GIVE ME A NEW ONE.
..
..THEN I SHALL HEREBY BESTOW YOUR NAME.
Hah!
THAT'S SETTLED THEN.


I ALWAYS THINK TO MYSELF "IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO TURN BACK. I CAN DO IT ANYTIME I WANT TO." BUT UNTIL NOW, I STILL HAVE YET TO BUDGE A STEP
WELL, WE HAD BETTER PERFORM THE PROPER RITES THEN
OR ELSE BANSHOU'LL HAVE BOTH OUR HEADS FOR SUPPER
RUKIA

You think of returning to the realm of the humans far too often for my liking.
IT'S SURPRISING, DON'T YOU THINK?
THAT I MAY HAVE WANTED THIS ALL ALONG
"May"? What do you mean "may"?

Just come right out and say it, you coward. This is exactly what you have been waiting for.
You may now be obligated to serve that family now, but the truth is, you are just glad to be a part of their lives, are you not?
I'm not going to complain. After all, thanks to you I'm going to have generations upon generations of servants, those poor unsuspecting bastards.
You may look all serious on the outside, but we both know that you are actually laughing on the inside, do we not?

It sure makes a demon wonder who exactly is depending upon whom...
...when you were the one who went about setting yourself up for servitude.
Do not forget. Life is not always about fun and games.
But you would love it if it were, would you not? Craven

IS THAT ALL YOU HAVE TO SAY?
WHAT A SURPRISE. YOU'RE NOT AS FEARLESS AS I FIRST THOUGHT..
STUNNED
!
IT'S ALL RIGHT, DON'T BE AFRAID..
stroke
stroke
DADDY'S HERE..
AND HE'LL EAT UP AAALL THE MONSTERS FOR YOU

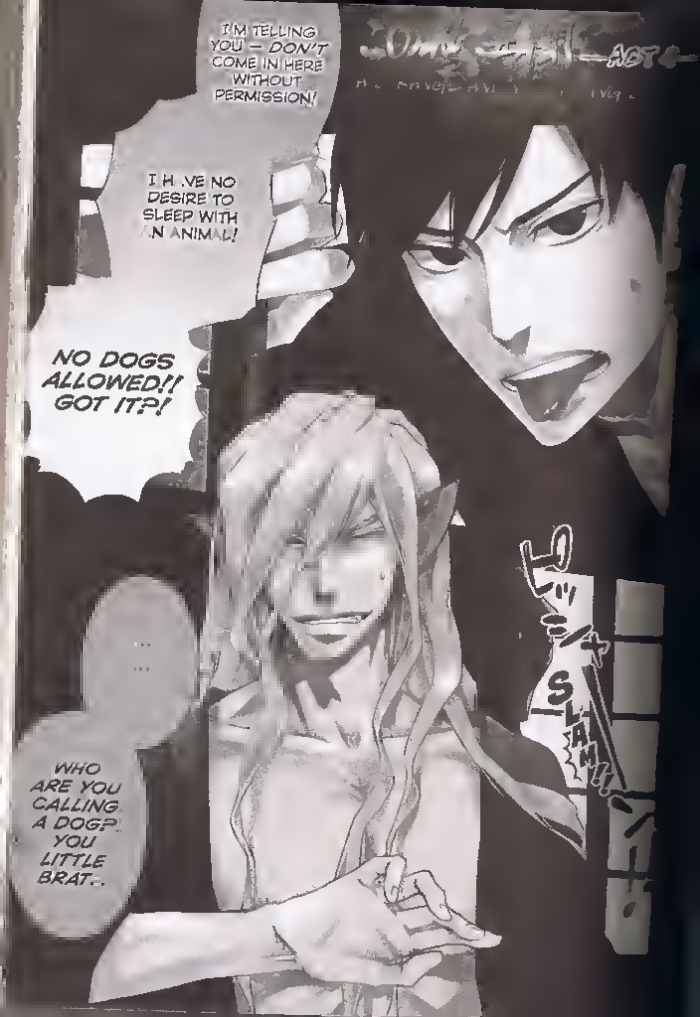
splurt
...HUH?

AH...
IT'S PITCH BLACK.

—UP!
JUST HOW LONG DO YOU WANT TO KEEP STAYING IN BED?
...?
GEEZ, I DON'T BELIEVE YOU WERE YOU BORN INTO THIS WORLD TO SLEEP OR SOMETHING?
IT'S ALMOST NIGHT, YOU KNOW?

YOUR BRAIN'S GONNA MELT IF YOU SLEEP ANY MORE—
—WHA
-WHOA!
YOU CALLING ME AN IDIOT?
H-
HEY-
grab
drag
W-WAIT JUST A MINUTE!
WHAT-EVER FOR?
WASN'T IT YOU WHO INVITED EVERYONE OVER FOR A BEER PARTY?
THEY'LL BE HERE SOON SO—
Call it off.

WHAT AM I, SOME KIND OF WENCH? YOU THINK I'M GONNA COPULATE WITH YOU AS AND WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE IT? IF YOU DO, THEN YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER THINK COMING, SHITHEAD!
STOMP
STOMP
STAM
I'm not so sure if going in is a good idea mean...
Sounds like they're at it again.
SEE THIS? THIS WAS JUST FROM LOOKING AT YOU ALONE. IT HAS TO BE TAKEN CARE OF, NOW.
VOLUME II
CHAPTER II
END


I'M TELLING YOU — DON'T COME IN HERE WITHOUT PERMISSION!
I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SLEEP WITH AN ANIMAL!
NO DOGS ALLOWED!! GOT IT?!
SLAM!!
...
...
WHO ARE YOU CALLING A DOG?! YOU LITTLE BRAT...

# 幽☆遊☆白書

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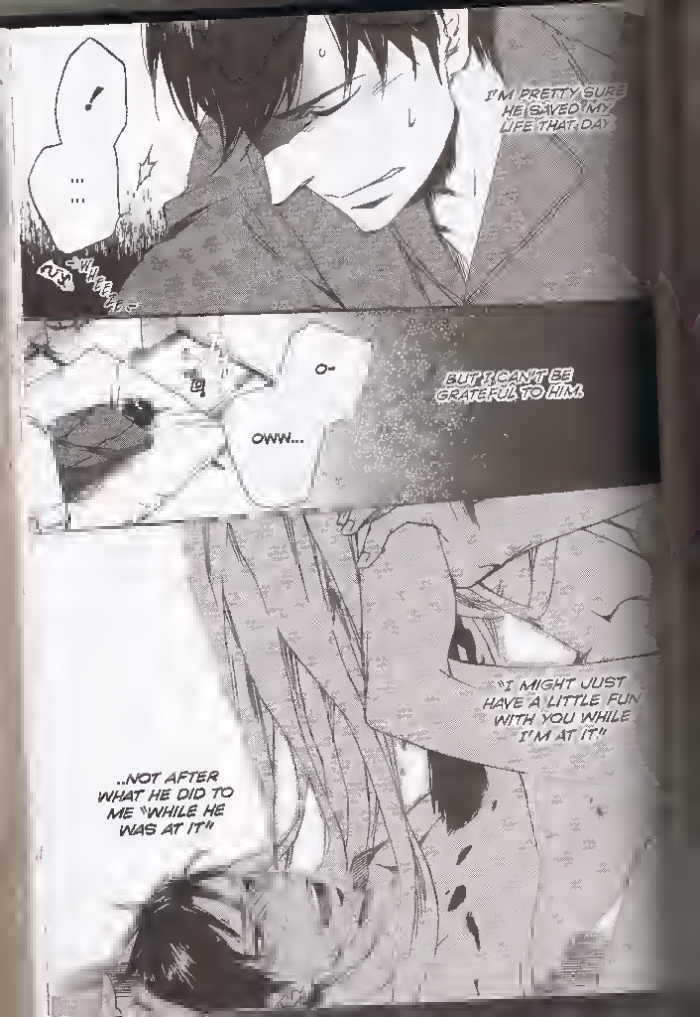
A LINGERING STORY

ACT 4

HEY, KID!
LIKE I SAID, I'M NOT A DOG. IT'S THE FIRST THING I TOLD YOU.
YIKES! DON'T COME IN!
THIS IS A STORY FROM BACK WHEN I WAS STILL ILL
I DON'T CARE!
ANYWAY, I FEEL HORRIBLE TODAY, SO LEAVE ME ALONE!
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID YESTER-DAY...
GET OUT!
OKAY, OKAY —
YOU CAN'T BE ALL THAT BAD OFF IF YOU CAN YELP LIKE THAT.
BUT DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.

I WON'T HELP YOU IF YOU COME CRYING TO ME LATER.
WHO'S GONNA CRY?!
SLAM
BOOF
...
...
...!
WHEEE...
POOF
UGH...
I FEEL EVEN WORSE.
MY HEAD IS STARTING TO SPIN...
HIS NAME IS SETSU. IT'S A NAME I GAVE HIM AT RANDOM.

I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND, BUT HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE MY FAMILY'S PROTECTIVE SPIRIT
I'LL NEVER TRUST HIM. EVER.
WHAT MANGA-VERSE IS HE SUPPOSED TO BE FROM?
WITH THOSE WEIRD EARS. AND EVEN A TAIL... HE'S A FREAK!
WELL, NOW THAT THE NIT-PICKER HAN'T HERE, I CAN FINALLY GET NAKED.
WHEW. MY TAIL WAS CRAMPED.
HE ISN'T HUMAN.
"IF IT'S IN MY POWER TO DO IT, I'LL GRANT YOU YOUR WISH."
HE APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME AS I WAS DYING FROM MY ILLNESS.


I'M PRETTY SURE HE SAVED MY LIFE THAT DAY.
!
...
...
AH, THAT'S RIGHT.
BUT I CAN'T BE GRATEFUL TO HIM.
O-
OWW...
"I MIGHT JUST HAVE A LITTLE FUN WITH YOU WHILE I'M AT IT"
..NOT AFTER WHAT HE DID TO ME "WHILE HE WAS AT IT"

I CAN'T REMEMBER — DID I ACTUALLY TELL HIM, "NO"!?

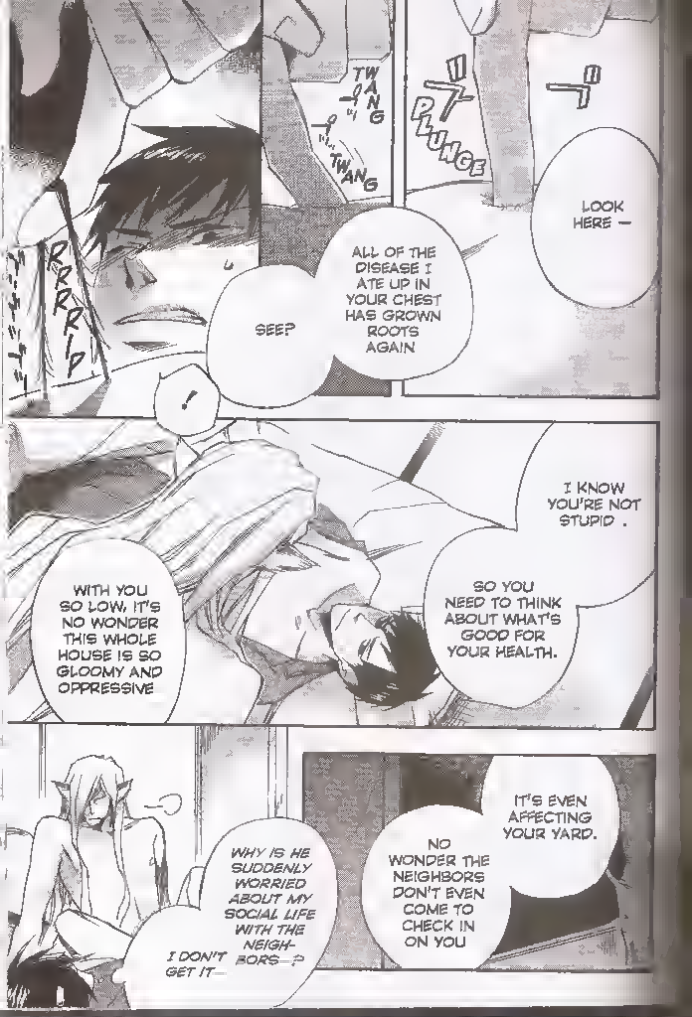
WHY COULDN'T I FIGHT HIM OFF PROPERLY!?

HE CONVINCED ME THAT I HAD NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RELY ON HIM

JUST WHAT ARE YOU, ANYWAY...?

HEY —
YOU.
HUFF
WOULD YOU JUST GIVE IT ALREADY!
YOU CAN HARDLY MOVE, RIGHT?
...
...
...
I'M TELLING YOU, I CAN MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER. WHY ARE YOU BEING SO STUBBORN?
HAVE I DONE SOMETHING TO UPSET YOU?
!
HUH? WHAT? YOU WANT TO HIT ME?
WHY? I DON'T GET IT

...
...
...
WHAT A PAIN.
!
FWSH
SNAP
PING
PING
-------!
UHH...
OH MAN..
THEY'VE INCREASED AGAIN


LOOK HERE —
PLUNGE
TWANG
TWANG
ALL OF THE DISEASE I ATE UP IN YOUR CHEST HAS GROWN ROOTS AGAIN
SEE?
RRRIP
I KNOW YOU'RE NOT STUPID .
SO YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH.
WITH YOU SO LOW, IT'S NO WONDER THIS WHOLE HOUSE IS SO GLOOMY AND OPPRESSIVE
IT'S EVEN AFFECTING YOUR YARD.
NO WONDER THE NEIGHBORS DON'T EVEN COME TO CHECK IN ON YOU
WHY IS HE SUDDENLY WORRIED ABOUT MY SOCIAL LIFE WITH THE NEIGHBORS—?
I DON'T GET IT—

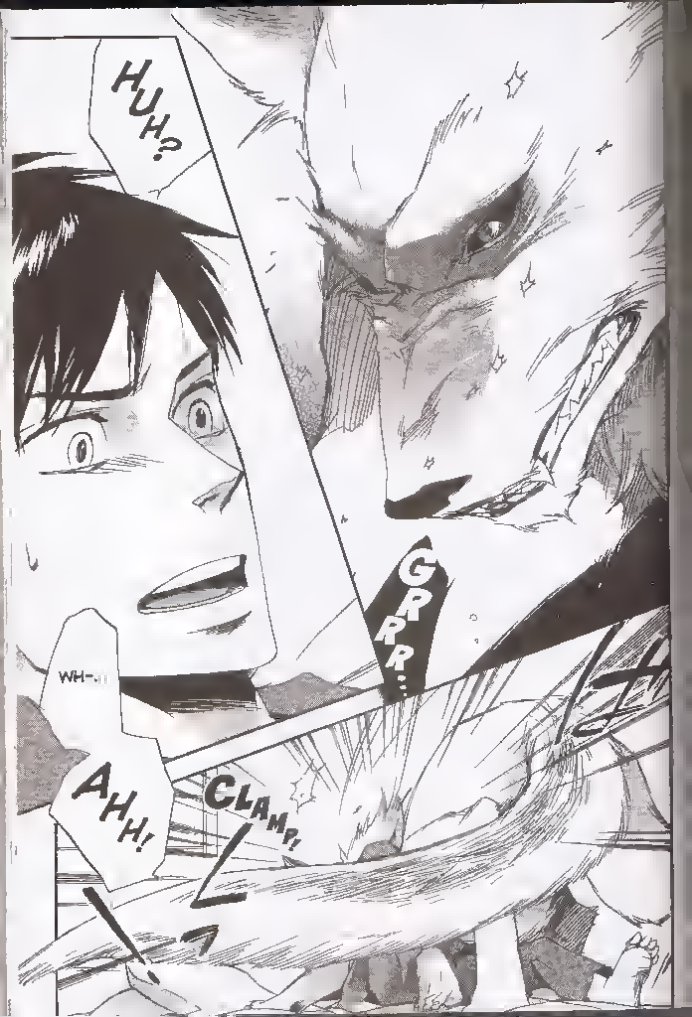
YOU SEE, I CAN'T HAVE YOU DYING ON ME
I'LL LOSE MY HOBBY...
WITHOUT A *HOBBY* —
I'LL PROBABLY BE SO BORED I'LL GO CRAZY, RIGHT?
*HOBBY?*
*OH, PROTECTING MY FAMILY'S BLOODLINE AND ALL THAT...*

AND *THEN* WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
WHAT DO YOU THINK SOMEONE WHO IS NEITHER COMPLETELY MAN NOR BEAST DOES FOR FUN, EH?
BUT I'M INDEBTED TO YOUR ANCESTOR, AND YOU RESEMBLE SOMEONE A LITTLE BIT...
I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER EITHER.
?

SO STOP HATING ME SO MUCH..
AND KEEP ME COMPANY..
!
MGGH...
N...
IT'S ..
THAT SCENT AGAIN..
STOP —
SLURP
MMPH —
SLURP
HIS TONGUE —
H.
IT'S SO LONG !
HM

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE AWFULLY QUIET...
YOU CAN SPEAK NOW, CAN'T YOU?
HAH!
HUH?
...
...
...?
O-OH...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO DO SOMETHING ELSE.
SWIPE
WHAT "SOMETHING ELSE"?
BLUSH
!
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?!
BOINK!
OUCH!

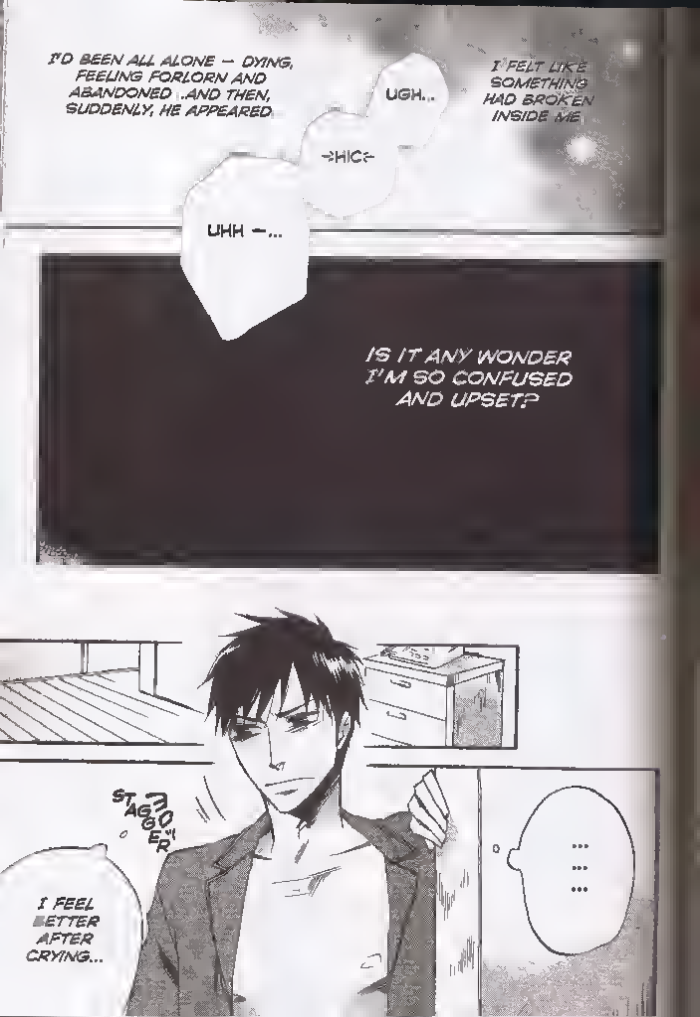
W-...
W-...
WHY YOU...
WOBBLE
WHOA! BACK OFF!
YOU'RE COMPLETELY NUDE —
SO YOU CAN MOVE YOUR LEGS...
MORPH
?!
WHA-
SETSU?!
FLAP
FLAP


HUH?
GRRR...
WH-
AHH!
CLAMP!

EEP!
SNIFF
SNIFF
!
...
...
HHFF
YOU'RE TOO JUMPY.
STAYING IN HUMAN FORM IS TAXING, YOU KNOW.
I COULD LET INSTINCT TAKE OVER AND DEVOUR YOUR FLESH RIGHT NOW —

SOB
SOB
SOB
U
U
.....!
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE YOU!
Q-QUIT CRYING!
YESTERDAY YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T CRY!
I'M NOT CRYING!
STOP LYING!

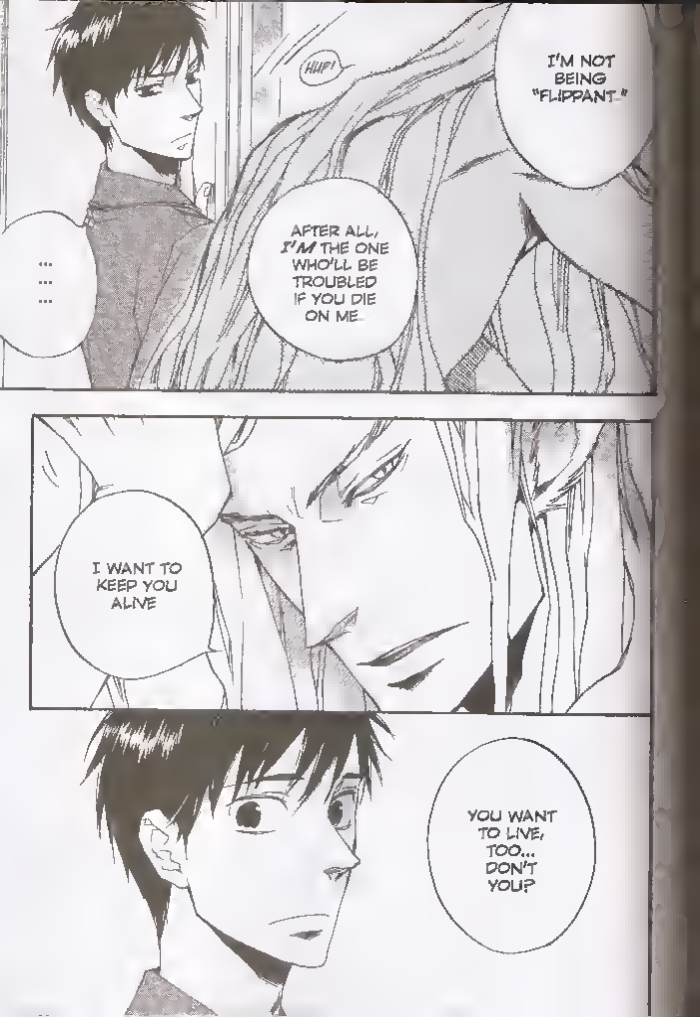
AHH, FORGET IT.
TAP
I WON'T BE ABLE TO CHANGE BACK FOR A WHILE, SO I'LL GIVE YOU A BREAK
SIT THERE AND SUFFER A BIT!
HIC
HIC
SNIFFLE
UGH.

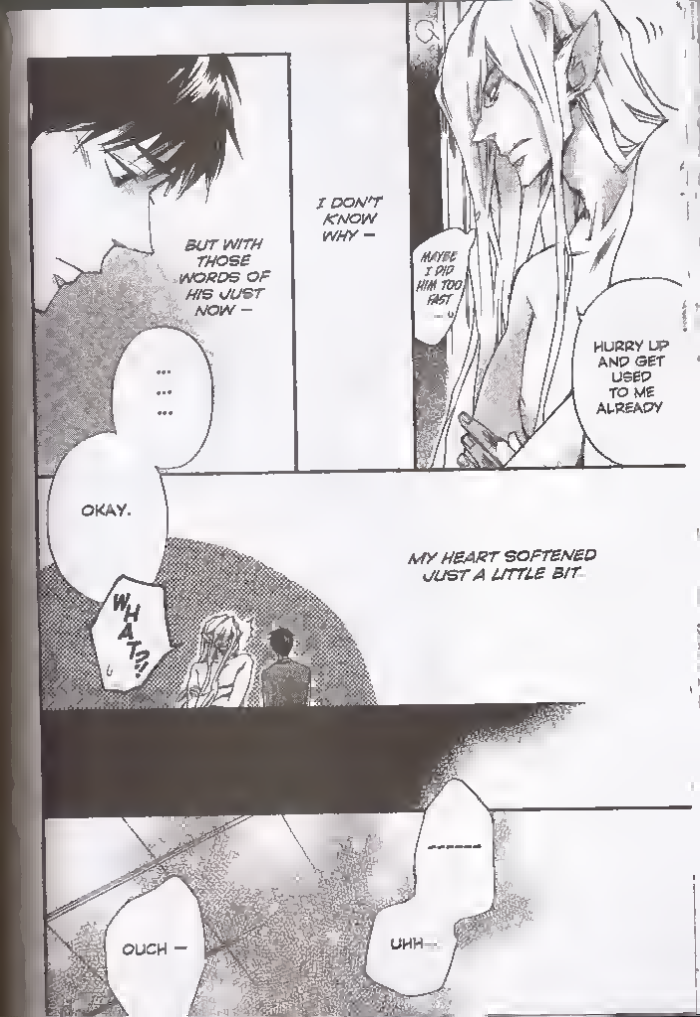

I'D BEEN ALL ALONE — DYING, FEELING FORLORN AND ABANDONED ..AND THEN, SUDDENLY, HE APPEARED
UGH..
I FELT LIKE SOMETHING HAD BROKEN INSIDE ME
=HIC=
UHH —...
IS IT ANY WONDER I'M SO CONFUSED AND UPSET?
STAGGER
I FEEL BETTER AFTER CRYING...
...
...
...

I NEED TO BE MORE OBJECTIVE ABOUT THIS
MAYBE THERE'S SOME LOGIC IN WHAT HE SAYS, TOO.
OPEN
AS LONG AS I MAKE IT CLEAR THAT I DON'T LIKE THE OTHER STUFF HE DOES TO ME
STAGGER
STAGGER
HE'LL JUST STICK TO EATING UP MY ILLNESS RIGHT?
YEAH
?
VOICES?
IS IT THE TV?
BAHAHAHA-
SETSU?
HUH?
...YO.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALL BY YOURSELF...?
SCARY...
HEY!
I THOUGHT I'D PURIFY THE PLACE A BIT FOR YOU —
WHAT? JUST DRINKING WITH THE GUYS IN YOUR YARD. THAT'S ALL
"THE GUYS IN MY YARD"?
THEY TOOK HALF THE BOTTLE!
DAMN GREEDY DRUNKS!
...
...
..
WHAT IS IT?
HEY..
YOU'RE ALREADY WAY PAST YOUR COMING-OF-AGE CEREMONY, RIGHT?
I HEARD ABOUT IT IN MIDDLE SCHOOL...
COMING-OF-AGE ...?
IF YOU'RE ASKING MY AGE, I'LL BE 23 THIS YEAR

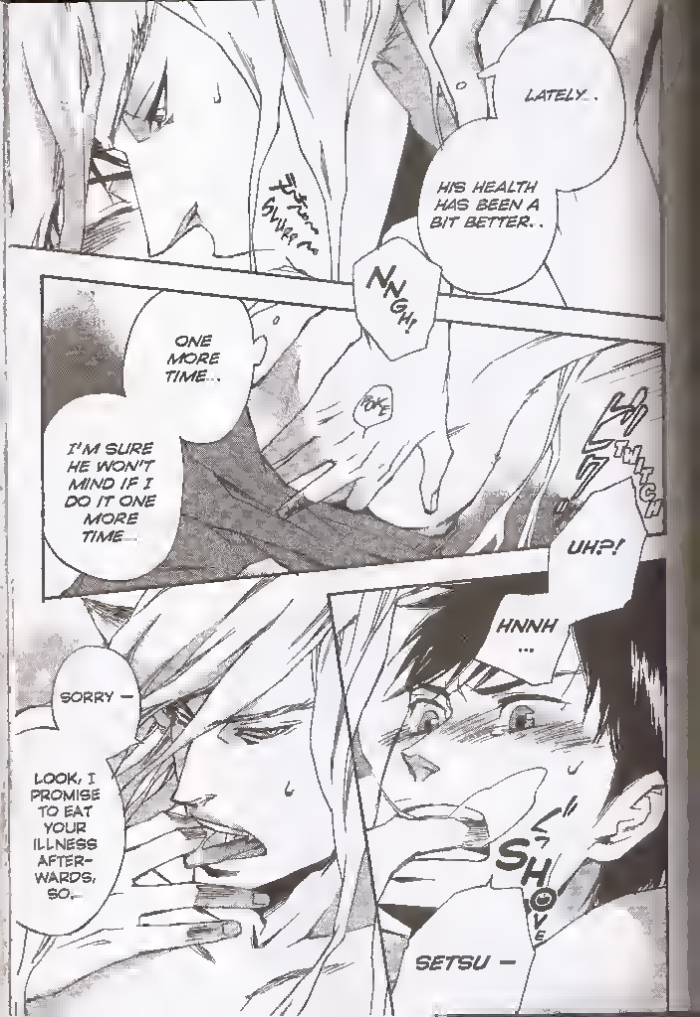
?!!
WHOOSH
WHAP!!
THESE GUYS SAY I'M THE FIRST MAN YOU'VE EVER HAD
SERIOUSLY, YOU'VE NEVER GOTTEN TO FIRST BASE WITH ANYONE ELSE BEF-
RUSTLE
ARRRGH..
GH..! B-BEATS ME.
WHAT WAS THAT SUDDEN BLAST OF ALCOHOL-FUMED AIR?!
FORGET IT.
ARE YOU IN A BETTER MOOD NOW?
MRGH
IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH MY MOOD!
IT'S YOUR ATTITUDE — YOU'RE TOO FLIPPANT ABOUT THE WHOLE THING!
YOU THINK?


I'M NOT BEING "FLIPPANT"
HUH?
AFTER ALL, I'M THE ONE WHO'LL BE TROUBLED IF YOU DIE ON ME.
...
I WANT TO KEEP YOU ALIVE
YOU WANT TO LIVE, TOO... DON'T YOU?


I DON'T KNOW WHY —
BUT WITH THOSE WORDS OF HIS JUST NOW —
MAYBE I DID HIM TOO FAST —
HURRY UP AND GET USED TO ME ALREADY
...
...
...
OKAY.
WHAT?!
MY HEART SOFTENED JUST A LITTLE BIT.
OUCH —
UHH—
------

QUIT COMPLAINING
I'M THE ONE WHO HAS TO EAT THIS DISGUSTING STUFF
UHH —
I SAID LIE DOWN.
NO!
IF I DO, I WON'T BE ABLE TO GET AWAY!
-SIGH-
NNGH!
AND WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE OFF MY CLOTHES!?
AND WHY ARE YOU L-LICKING ME?!
WILL YOU SHUT UP?

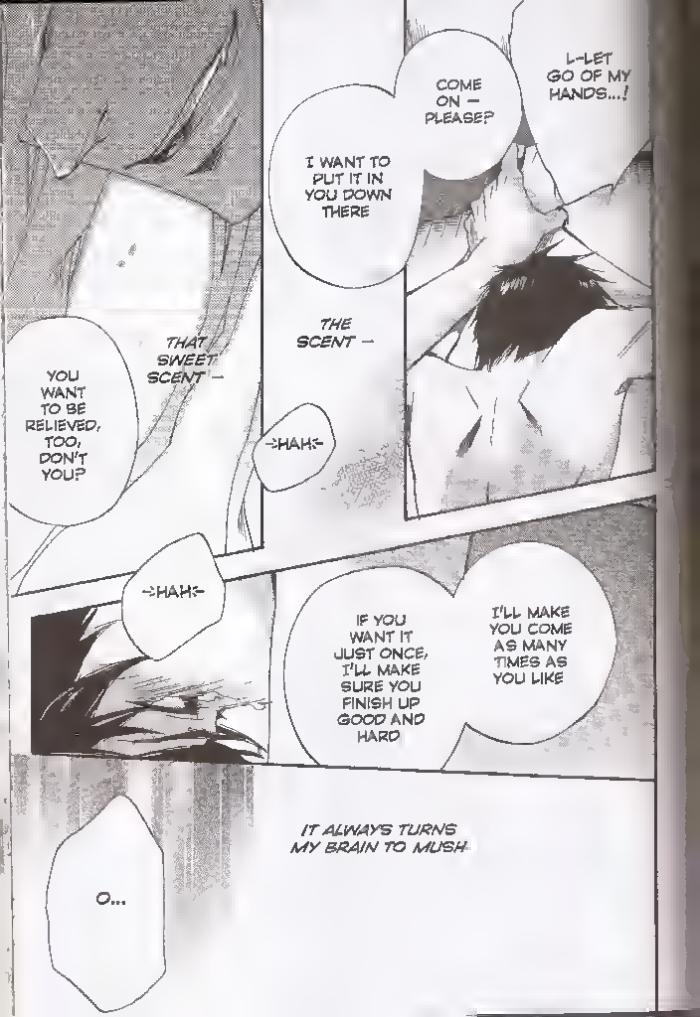
M...
MMPH!
NN..
SLIDE
NN!
SQUISH
GRIP
HE'S GOT A REALLY SOFT ASS..
SQUISH
SQUISH
SQUISH
FLAP
HUFF
HUFF
HE STRUGGLES, BUT HE'S SO WEAK AND INEFFECTUAL..
IT ACTUALLY.. GETS ME HARDER--
NN —
N!
.....!
.....!!


LATELY..
HIS HEALTH HAS BEEN A BIT BETTER..
NNGH!
ONE MORE TIME...
I'M SURE HE WON'T MIND IF I DO IT ONE MORE TIME...
POKE
UH?!
HNNH ...
SORRY —
LOOK, I PROMISE TO EAT YOUR ILLNESS AFTERWARDS, SO...
SHOVE
SETSU —

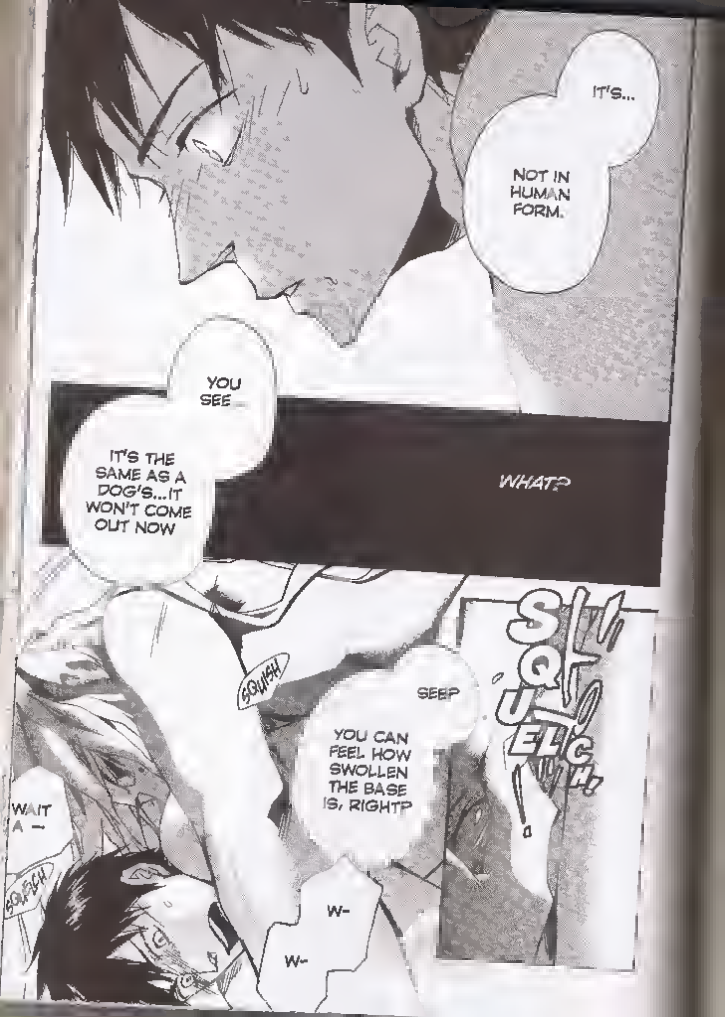
TWITCH
FLINCH
MAYBE IT WAS ACCIDENTALLY TURNING BACK INTO A BEAST THAT DID IT...
UHFF!
SQUISH
OUCH!
THE WEATHER'S BEEN SO WARM...
I'M WONDERING IF I HAVE A MATING SEASON, TOO—
SQUELCH
YOU KNOW, LIKE ANIMALS DO..?
SHOVE!
JERK!!
!
OH?

I KNEW IT.
YOU LIKE IT, DON'T YOU?
LICK
OH —
OH...!
NO —
— I DON'T WANT TO — !
HMM...
LICK
GRIND
UHH!
UNHH!
HAH!

UHH...
OHH —
PLUCK
PLUCK
SLIP
...!
GAP
SQUELCH
-HAH-!
HEY —
I PROMISE IT WON'T HURT...LET ME PUT THIS IN YOU, OKAY?
-HAH-!

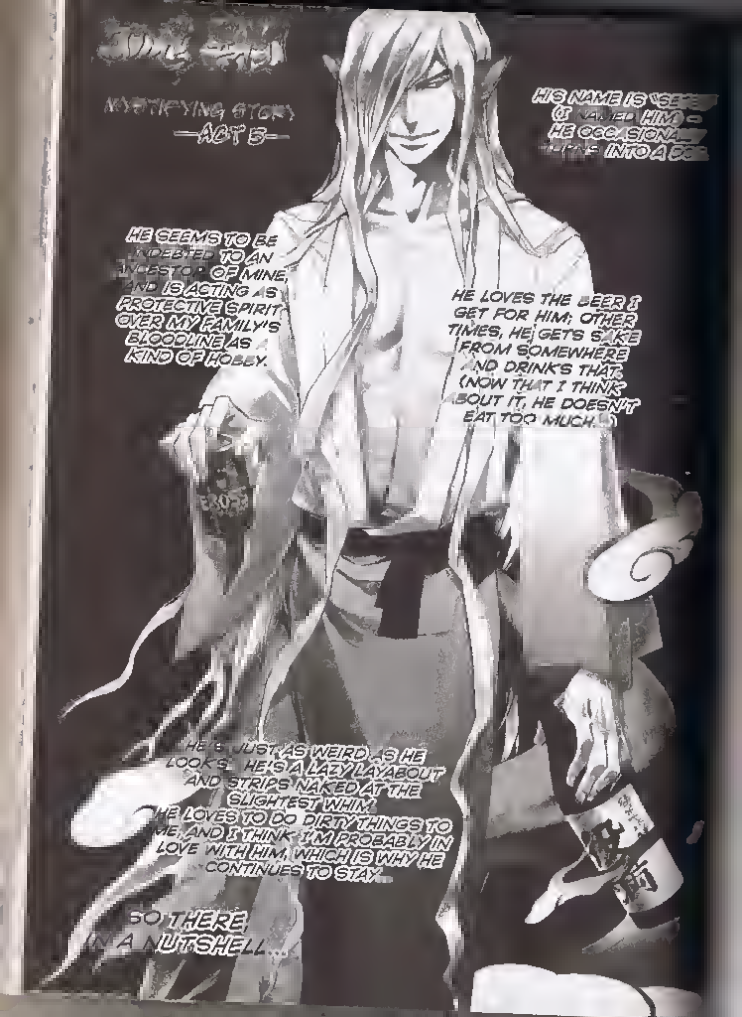

L-LET GO OF MY HANDS...!
COME ON — PLEASE?
I WANT TO PUT IT IN YOU DOWN THERE
THE SCENT —
THAT SWEET SCENT —
YOU WANT TO BE RELIEVED, TOO, DON'T YOU?
-:HAH:-
-:HAH:-
IF YOU WANT IT JUST ONCE, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU FINISH UP GOOD AND HARD
I'LL MAKE YOU COME AS MANY TIMES AS YOU LIKE
IT ALWAYS TURNS MY BRAIN TO MUSH
O...

OKAY...
JUST ONCE.
SHOVE
AHH...
NN!
BUT —
ZLURP...
REALLY. I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS


IT'S...
NOT IN HUMAN FORM.
YOU SEE...
IT'S THE SAME AS A DOG'S...IT WON'T COME OUT NOW
WHAT?
SQUISH
SEEP
YOU CAN FEEL HOW SWOLLEN THE BASE IS, RIGHT?
SQUELCH
WAIT A—
SQUISH
W-
W-

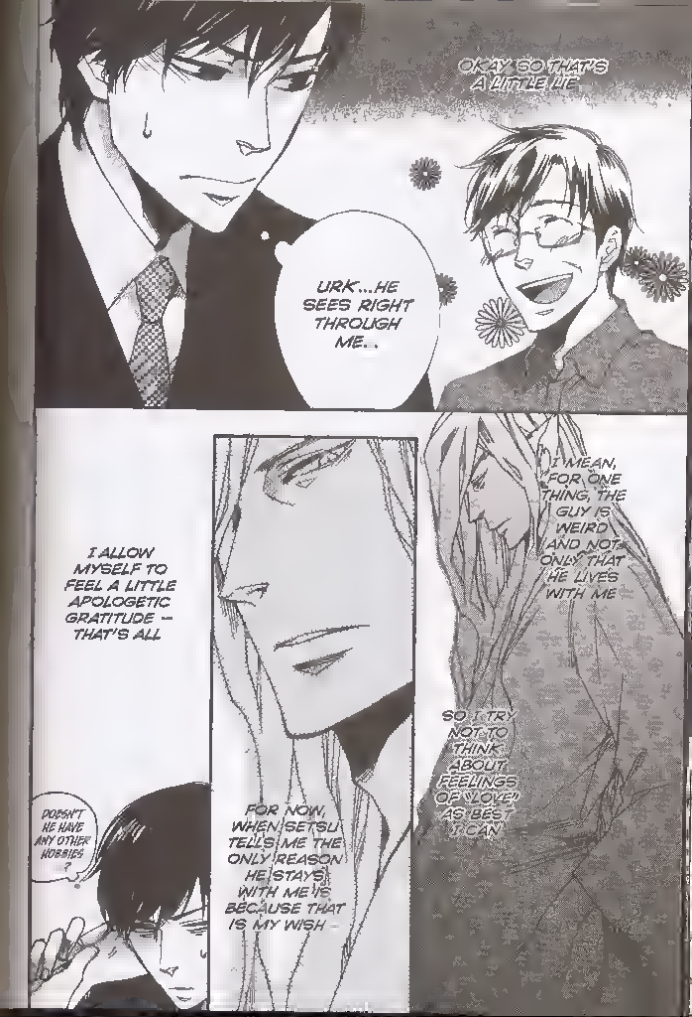
SORRY IT'S MADE YOU GO LIMP...
BUT DON'T WORRY, YOU'LL BE HARD AGAIN IN A MINUTE.
P-
PULL IT OUT!
LIKE I SAID — I CAN'T.
OH MAN, IT FEELS GOOD...
AHH!
FORGET IT — IT'S NO GOOD
LET'S HAVE FUN, SHALL WE?
NOW I HATE YOU MORE THAN EVER.

A STRANGE AND MYSTIFYING STORY, ACT 4 / END

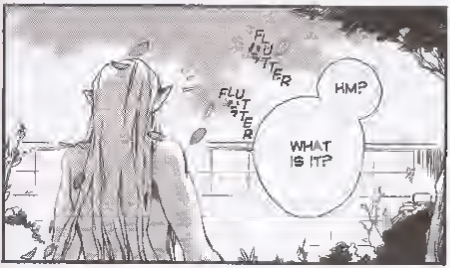

MYSTIFYING STORY
—ACT 5—
HIS NAME IS "SEER" OF [illegible] HIM ON OCCASION [illegible] INTO A DOG.
HE SEEMS TO BE INDEBTED TO AN ANCESTOR OF MINE, AND IS ACTING AS A PROTECTIVE SPIRIT OVER MY FAMILY'S BLOODLINE AS KIND OF HOBBY.
HE LOVES THE BEER I GET FOR HIM; OTHER TIMES, HE GETS SAKE FROM SOMEWHERE AND DRINKS THAT. (NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, HE DOESN'T EAT TOO MUCH...)
HE'S JUST AS WEIRD AS HE LOOKS. HE'S A LAZY LAYABOUT AND STRIPS NAKED AT THE SLIGHTEST WHIM.
HE LOVES TO DO DIRTY THINGS TO ME, AND I THINK I'M PROBABLY IN LOVE WITH HIM, WHICH IS WHY HE CONTINUES TO STAY.
SO THERE, IN A NUTSHELL...

BUT IT'S LIKE KNOWING NOTHING AT ALL...
...IS ALL I KNOW.
...
...
MYSTIFYING STORY
ACT 5

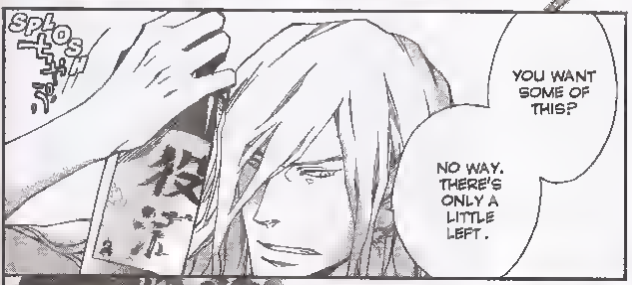
OH, AKI-KUN...
YOU LOOK SO RADIANT LATELY!
WHY IS THAT?
HUH? ACTUALLY —
I THINK THAT APPLIES TO YOU, SASAKI-SAN...
BESIDES, LOVE NEVER HAPPENS TO ME.
BOTH OF YOU TEASING ME LIKE THIS
I SWEAR —
OH, REALLY?
WHY WOULD YOU SAY SUCH A THING, ALL OF A SUDDEN?
OH! I KNOW WHAT IT IS
YOU'RE IN LOVE! THAT'S IT, ISN'T IT?
I'M NO GIRL!

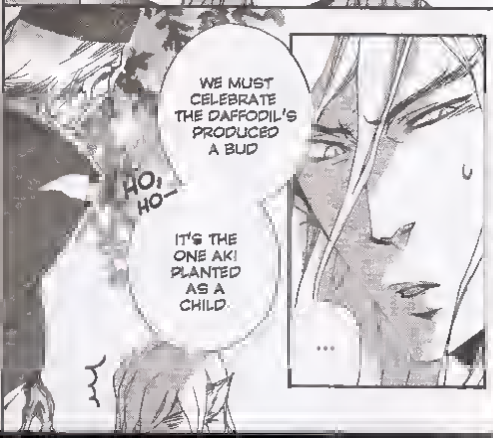

OKAY, SO THAT'S A LITTLE LIE
URK...HE SEES RIGHT THROUGH ME...
I MEAN, FOR ONE THING, THE GUY IS WEIRD AND NOT ONLY THAT HE LIVES WITH ME
SO I TRY NOT TO THINK ABOUT FEELINGS OF "LOVE" AS BEST I CAN
I ALLOW MYSELF TO FEEL A LITTLE APOLOGETIC GRATITUDE -- THAT'S ALL
FOR NOW, WHEN SETSU TELLS ME THE ONLY REASON HE STAYS WITH ME IS BECAUSE THAT IS MY WISH -
DOESN'T HE HAVE ANY OTHER HOBBIES?

THERE'RE STILL TOO MANY THINGS I DON'T KNOW ABOUT HIM
NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT —
I WONDER WHAT HE DOES WHILE I'M AT WORK?
AHH —
WHAT GREAT WEATHER


FLUTTER
FLUTTER
HM?
WHAT IS IT?

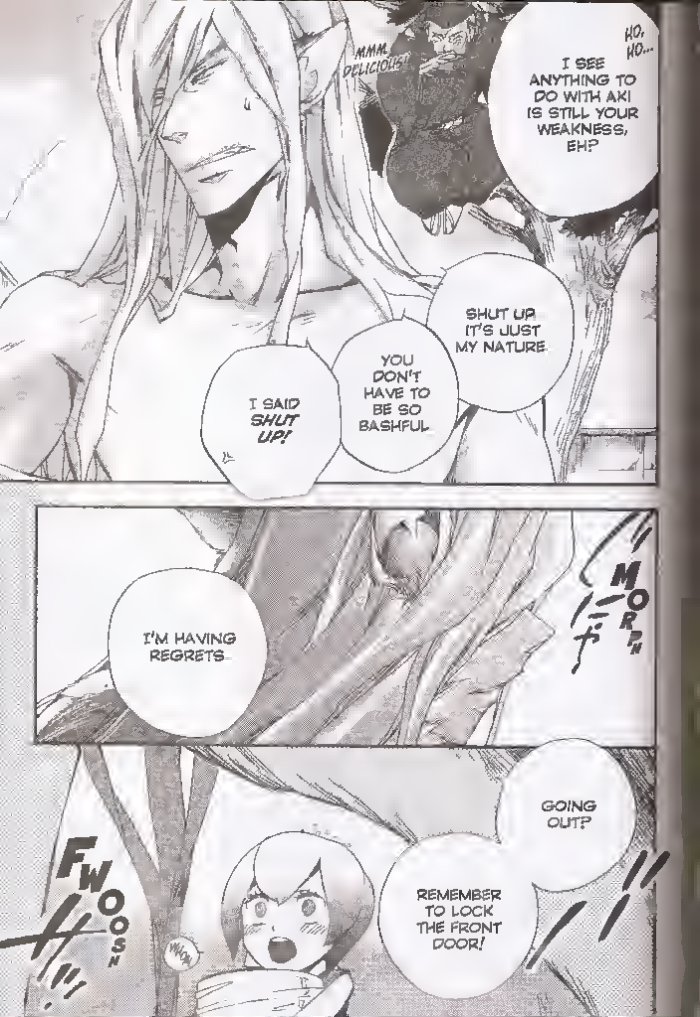
AH! NOTHING BETTER THAN DRINKING SAKE DURING THE DAY.
THIS HOUSE FELT MUCH MORE COMPY, TOO

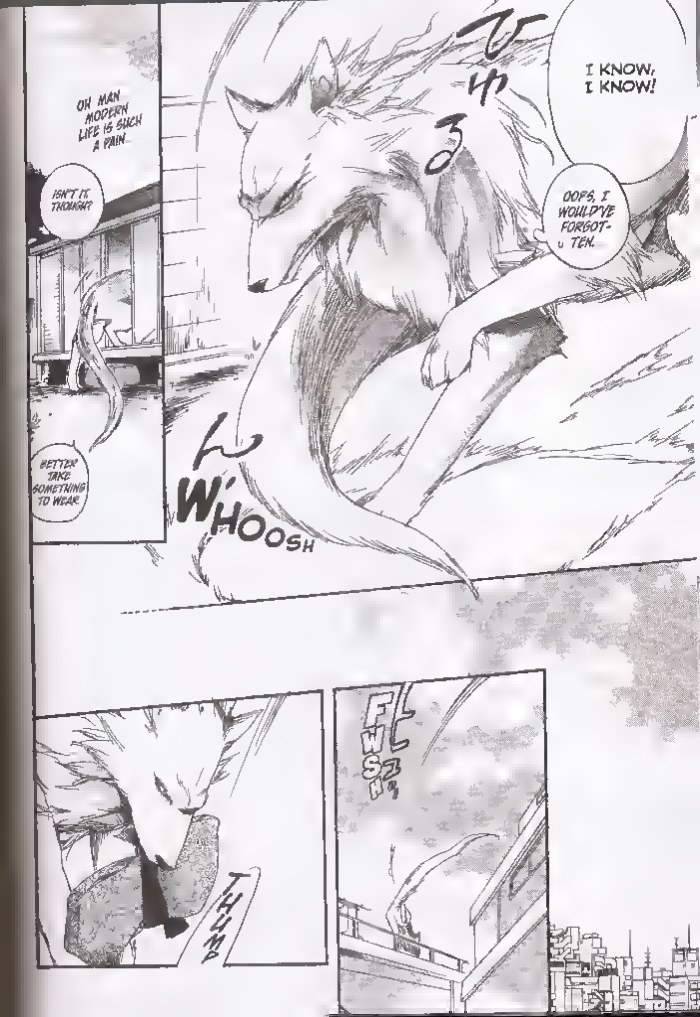

SPLOSH
YOU WANT SOME OF THIS?
NO WAY. THERE'S ONLY A LITTLE LEFT.

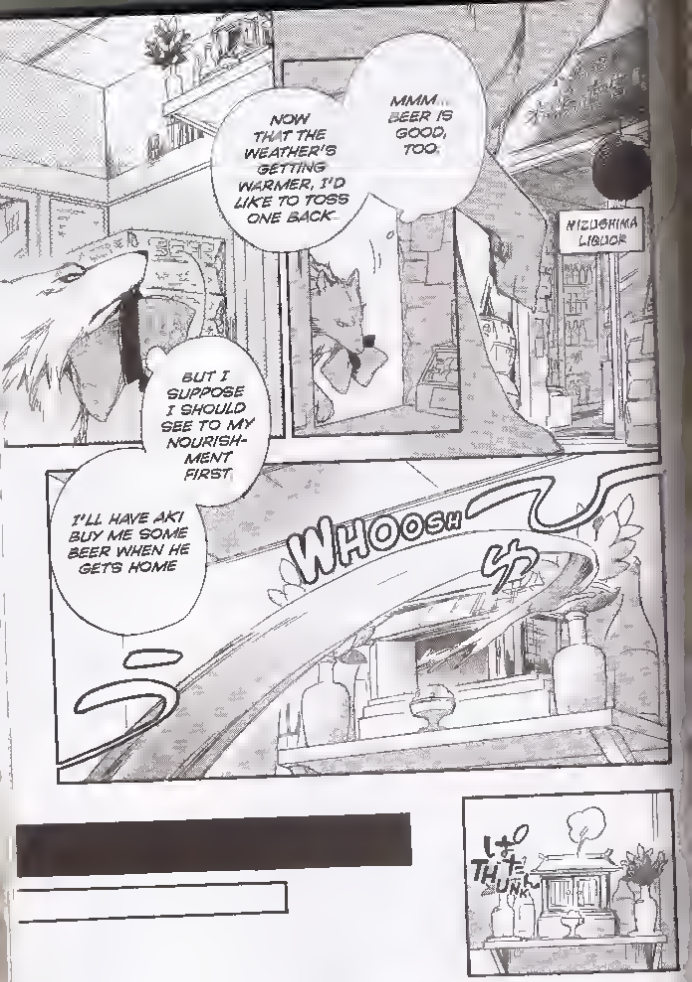

WE MUST CELEBRATE THE DAFFODIL'S PRODUCED A BUD
HO! HO—
IT'S THE ONE AKI PLANTED AS A CHILD
...

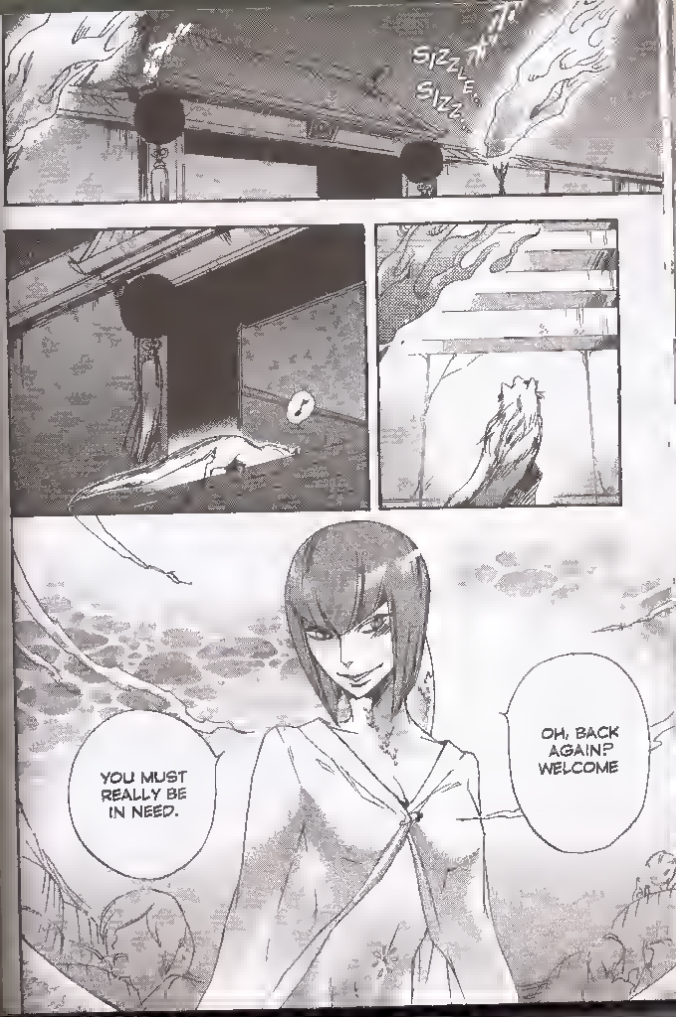
I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO WATER YOU FROM NOW ON!
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
O-OKAY, OKAY!
WAIT! I'M SORRY!
YEAH, OLD MAN, BUT —
THIS SAKE IS A SPECIAL BREW I HAD TO ASK A FRIEND OF MINE FOR SPECIFICALLY —
YOU'RE OLDER THAN I AM, YOU STUPID DOG!
WE ARE THANKFUL TO YOU, TOO.
WE JUST WANT TO BLOOM AND FLOURISH AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SO WE CAN PURIFY THIS PLACE AND HELP YOU!
YOU DEPEND ON OUR PURIFYING ABILITY AT LEAST A LITTLE, DON'T YOU?
YOUR INSIDES ARE PITCH-BLACK FROM DEVOURING THE ILL SPIRIT DWELLING INSIDE AKI AND THIS HOUSE.
SLURP
SHEESH
YOU SHOULDN'T DWELL ON THE PAST, GRANDPA
I REMEMBER WHEN SETSUKO WAS STILL AROUND; THE SUN'S RAYS PURIFIED, AND THE KOUJIN-SAMA PRESIDED OVER THE KITCHEN —
BUT WE ARE STILL TOO WEAK. A LITTLE OFFERING OF SACRED SAKE WOULD DO US WONDERS

LOOK AT HOW SPINDLY THAT DAFFODIL IS... IT MAY NOT EVEN BLOSSOM PROPERLY
ARRGH! FINE, FINE! I GET IT!
QUIT GUILT-TRIPPING ME!
BESIDES, AKI WATERS US PROPERLY EVERY DAY. DOESN'T HE?
NEXT YEAR, I'M GOING TO MAKE EVEN MORE PEACH FLOWERS BLOSSOM — YOU WAIT AND SEE!
YES, BUT IT DOESN'T SERVE AS NOURISHMENT.
I ONLY MANAGED TO MAKE TWO FLOWERS BLOOM THIS SPRING, BUT...
AKI WAS THE FIRST ONE TO NOTICE THEM ON ME! ♡
HERE... YOU, TOO.
DON'T LET THE OTHERS TAKE IT FROM YOU.
PLINK
YAY, YAY -
HURRAY, HURRAY -
YAY -
YOU'D BETTER DIVIDE IT EQUALLY AMONGST YOURSELVES!
THIS IS MY PRECIOUS MEAL, YOU KNOW!


MMM, DELICIOUS!!
HO, HO... I SEE ANYTHING TO DO WITH AKI IS STILL YOUR WEAKNESS, EH?
SHUT UP. IT'S JUST MY NATURE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO BASHFUL.
I SAID SHUT UP!
I'M HAVING REGRETS...
MORN
GOING OUT?
REMEMBER TO LOCK THE FRONT DOOR!
FWOOSH!!!
WOW!

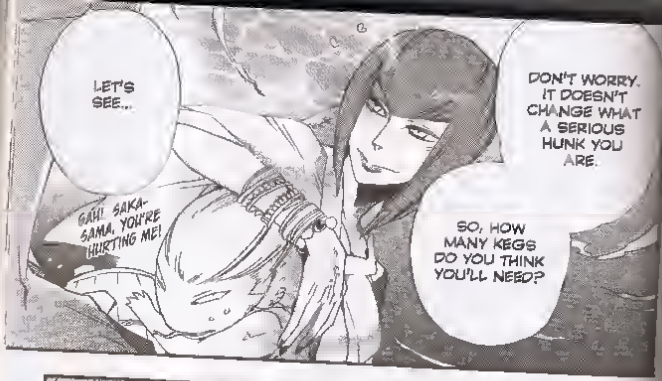

OH MAN MODERN LIFE IS SUCH A PAIN...
ISN'T IT, THOUGH?
BETTER TAKE SOMETHING TO WEAR.
WHOOSH
I KNOW, I KNOW!
OOPS, I WOULD'VE FORGOTTEN...
THUMP
FLWSH

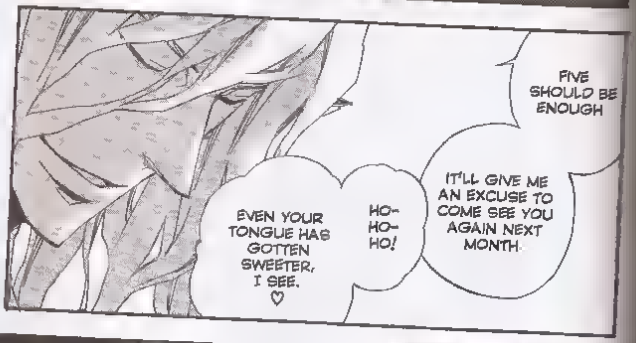

NOW THAT THE WEATHER'S GETTING WARMER, I'D LIKE TO TOSS ONE BACK.
MMM... BEER IS GOOD, TOO.
MIZUSHIMA LIQUOR
BUT I SUPPOSE I SHOULD SEE TO MY NOURISH-MENT FIRST.
I'LL HAVE AKI BUY ME SOME BEER WHEN HE GETS HOME
WHOOSH
THE THUNK

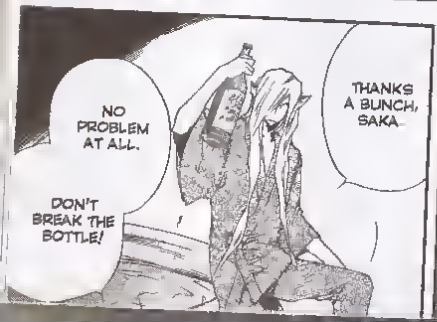

SIZZLE.
SIZZ..
OH, BACK AGAIN? WELCOME
YOU MUST REALLY BE IN NEED.

TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I'D PREFER TO COME ALL THE WAY UP TO IZUMO TO SEE YOU FACE-TO-FACE.
HO-HO! HOW SWEET OF YOU.
REALLY, YOU SHOULD STOP BY ONE OF THESE DAYS.
YOU'RE A SPECIAL CUSTOMER OF OURS FROM WAY BACK...
I PROMISE TO GIVE YOU A WARM RECEPTION!
I WISH I COULD SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN DEVOURED BY A HUMAN.
IT'S KIND OF EXOTIC, ISN'T IT? BEING HALF-HUMAN-.
SO, DO YOU SPEND MORE TIME IN THAT *OTHER* FORM NOWADAYS?

EVERYBODY, COME SEE WHAT BANGHŌ LOOKS LIKE NOW
OH, MY! THAT'S PRETTY GOOD!
YOU MEAN THIS?
EEK!
LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
...COULD YOU PUT THIS ON MY TAB AGAIN?
SURE, NO PROBLEM
OOH, HE'S HANDSOME!
IS THAT REALLY BANGHŌ?
WHY'S HE WEARING CLOTHES?
OOH, HE'S IN HUMAN FORM!
WHAT, WHAT? LEMME SEE!
CHATTER CHATTER
SAKA, SORRY TO TROUBLE YOU, BUT...
WOW — THAT HUMAN YOU MELDED WITH MUST HAVE BEEN PRETTY HONORABLE
YOU USED TO BE AN IRRESPONSIBLE JERK
... ...
NOT ONE COMPLIMENT, EH?

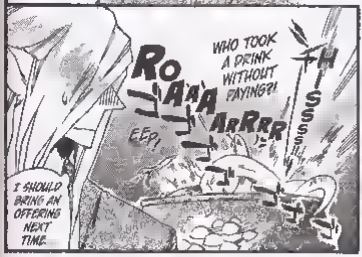

LET'S SEE...
DON'T WORRY. IT DOESN'T CHANGE WHAT A SERIOUS HUNK YOU ARE.
GAH! SAKA-SAMA, YOU'RE HURTING ME!
SO, HOW MANY KEGS DO YOU THINK YOU'LL NEED?

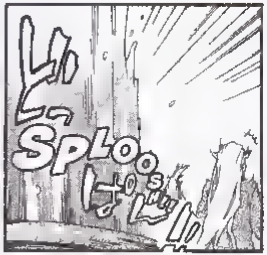

FIVE SHOULD BE ENOUGH
IT'LL GIVE ME AN EXCUSE TO COME SEE YOU AGAIN NEXT MONTH.
HO-HO-HO!
EVEN YOUR TONGUE HAS GOTTEN SWEETER, I SEE. ♡


THANKS A BUNCH, SAKA.
NO PROBLEM AT ALL.
DON'T BREAK THE BOTTLE!

POKE
HERE YOU GO.

OKAY, OKAY, SEE YOU.
YOU'D BETTER NOT START GOING TO SOME OTHER WOMAN FOR YOUR SPIRITS, OR I WON'T FORGIVE YOU!
I'LL KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR SOME GOOD PURIFYING ANTIDOTE FOR YOU, TOO




HEY, YAMANE-KUN —

YES?
HOW 'BOUT A DRINKING PARTY TODAY?
HATOKI-KUN JUST CONTACTED ME.. AND HE SAID HE'LL BE BRINGING KUBOTA'S "TOKUGETSU" FROM HOME!
HUH? WHAT THE? GIBBERISH DRUNK —
IT'S REALLY GOOD SAKE, SO I WONDERED IF SETSU-SAN WOULD LIKE SOME, TOO.
OH — BUT..
WOULD WE BE INTRUDING ..?
NO! NOT AT ALL!
PLEASE, COME ON OVER!
GRIN~

I SWEAR, HE LOVES TEASING ME
THEN I'LL INFORM HATOKI-KUN!
SIGH~
WHOA!
BEER!!
SERIOUSLY?
I WONDER IF THEY'LL BRING SOMETHING GOOD AGAIN.
THAT'S WHAT HE WAS SAYING ..
REALLY?!
THE MUSEUM DIRECTOR AND THE OTHERS ARE COMING OVER TO DRINK
GEE, EAGER ENOUGH?
WHAT'S GOING ON? IT'S UNUSUAL OF YOU!

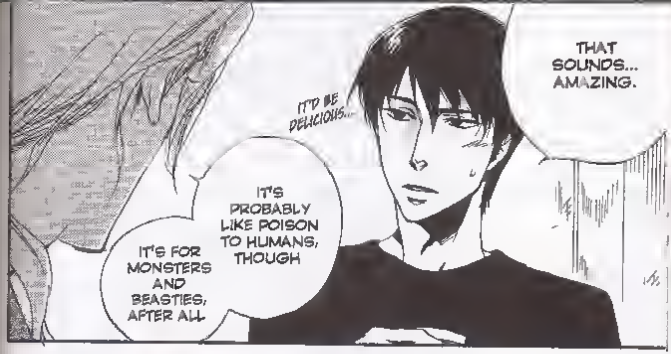
COME TO THINK OF IT, WHY ARE YOU IN HUMAN FORM?
HM?
HUH...?
SO HE TAKES WALKS AND ALL...
OH..
I WENT FOR A WALK AND CAME BACK
OH, I WAS JUST OUTSIDE
OH!
DON'T START DRINKING YET!
HEY!!
SNAP
WELL... A LITTLE..
DOES IT BOTHER YOU?

I SWEAR, YOU HAVE NO SELF-CONTROL.
...OH.
YEAH.
THAT'S EXACTLY IT.
?
I HAVE NO SELF-CONTROL
THAT'S MY NATURE
WHAT ARE YOU GOING ON ABOUT...?
SLIP!

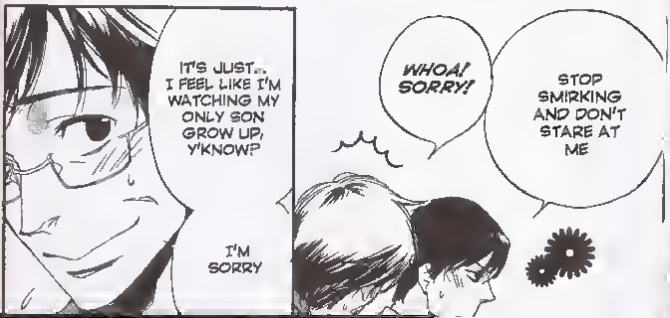
I JUST CAN'T RESIST MY NEEDS.
?
I'M AN UNHOLY MELDING OF MAN AND BEAST, BUT...
?!
SLIDE
...IT SEEMS YOU APPEAL TO BOTH SIDES.
?!
DING DONG-
DING DONG
DING DONG
AKI-KUN —

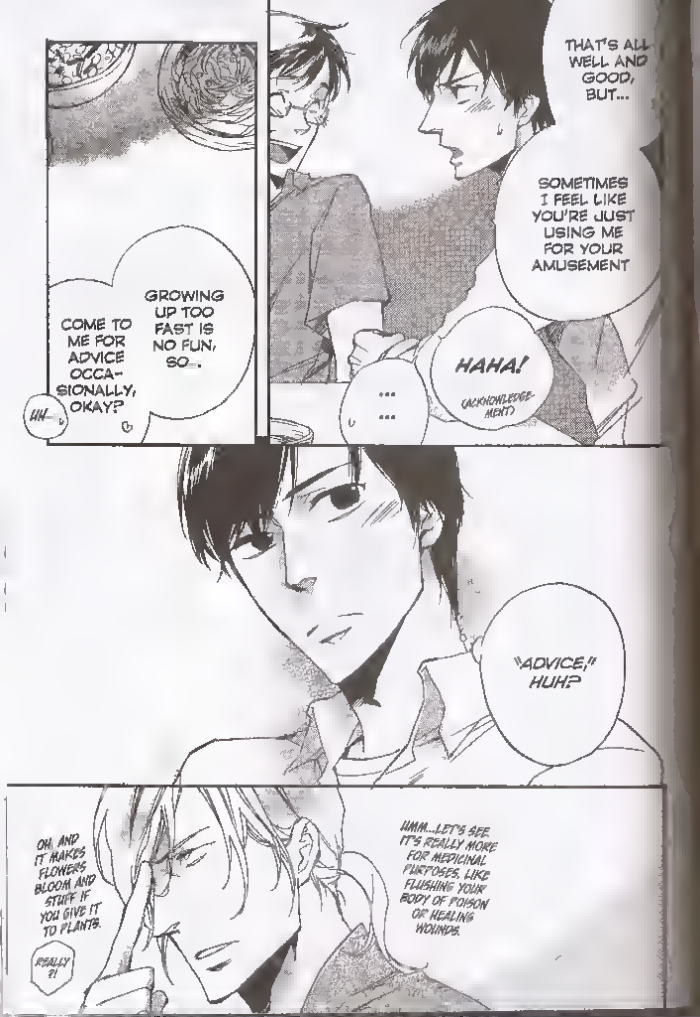
ARE WE INTERRUPTING SOMETHING?
?
NO! NOT AT ALL!
COME IN!
HUM? HE SEEMS REALLY HAPPY.
HA-HA...
HERE YOU GO.
CUT HIS HAIR
WHOA! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
GOOD EVENING, SETSU-SAN~

HMM-
OOH! NOW THIS IS QUITE ...
I SEE...
GOOD SAKE, ISN'T IT?
I DON'T REALLY GET IT, BUT IT SOUNDS GREAT.
THOUGH I GOT IT AS A GIFT
IT'S A GOOD PRICE, TOO
Y'SEE, ALL I'VE BEEN DRINKING LATELY IS THIS STUFF I GET FROM A SAKE SPIRIT I KNOW.
YOU HUMANS ARE PRETTY GOOD AT MAKING SAKE, TOO.
I CAN'T TELL...
DON'T OVERDO IT, AKI-KUN.


THAT SOUNDS... AMAZING.
IT'D BE DELICIOUS...
IT'S PROBABLY LIKE POISON TO HUMANS, THOUGH
IT'S FOR MONSTERS AND BEASTIES, AFTER ALL

IT'S GOOD... BUT THIS IS GOOD, TOO.
REALLY
I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF IT
PLEASE, TELL ME SOME MORE
HUH? ABOUT THE SAKE, YOU MEAN?
...

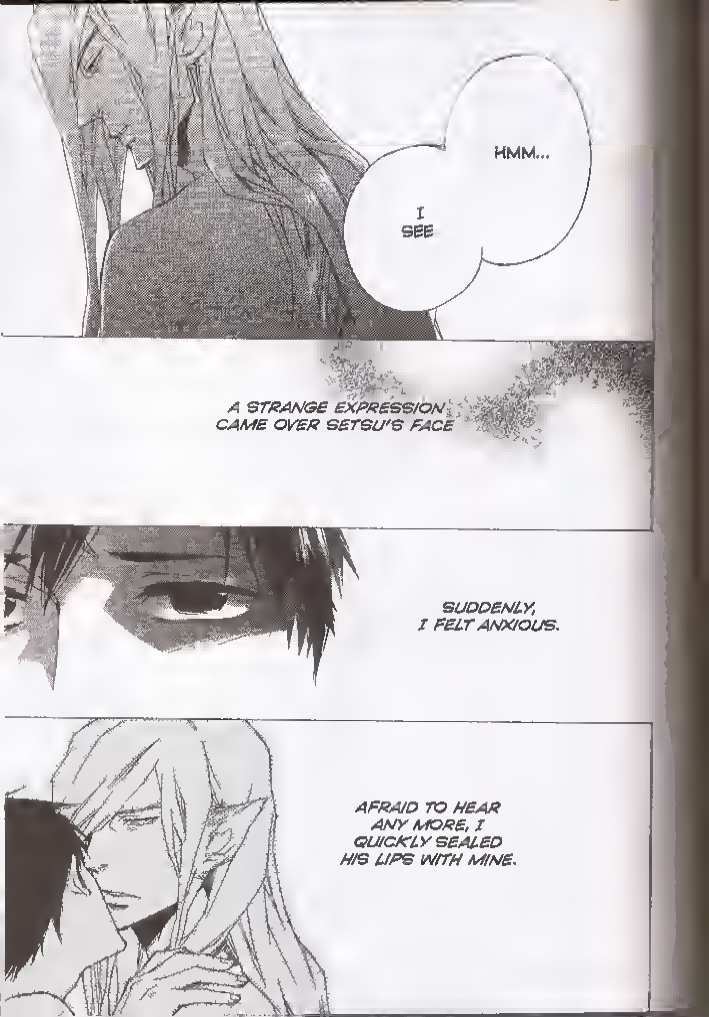

IT'S JUST... I FEEL LIKE I'M WATCHING MY ONLY SON GROW UP, Y'KNOW?
I'M SORRY
WHOA! SORRY!
STOP SMIRKING AND DON'T STARE AT ME

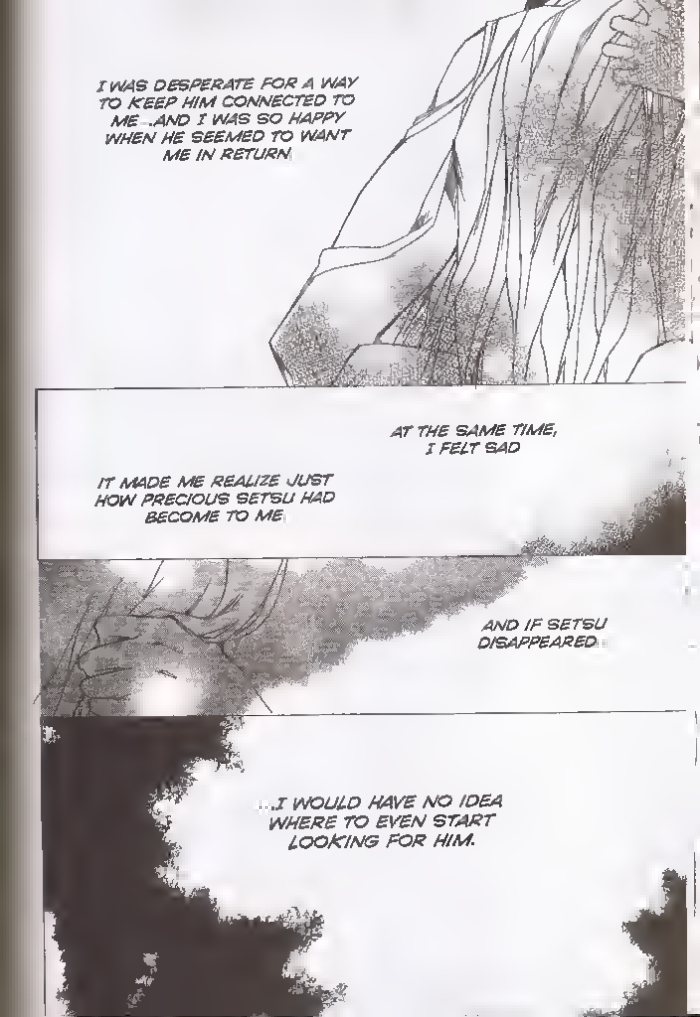

THAT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT...
SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE YOU'RE JUST USING ME FOR YOUR AMUSEMENT
HAHA!
(ACKNOWLEDGEMENT)
...
...
GROWING UP TOO FAST IS NO FUN, SO_.
COME TO ME FOR ADVICE OCCA-SIONALLY, OKAY?
UH_
"ADVICE," HUH?
UMM...LET'S SEE. IT'S REALLY MORE FOR MEDICINAL PURPOSES, LIKE FLUSHING YOUR BODY OF POISON OR HEALING WOUNDS.
OH, AND IT MAKES FLOWERS BLOOM AND STUFF IF YOU GIVE IT TO PLANTS.
REALLY?!

ABOUT MY INABILITY TO READ SETSU'S TRUE INTENTIONS...?

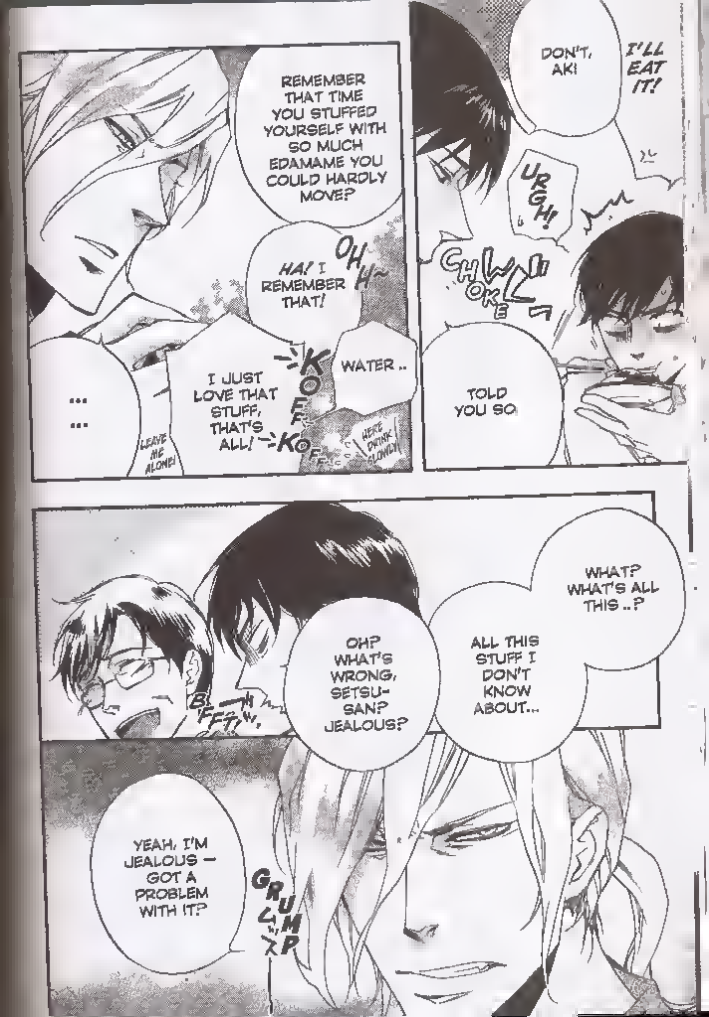
ABOUT, FOR INSTANCE, WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO IF SETSU WERE TO ONE DAY DISAPPEAR...

AS SUDDENLY AS HE APPEARED IN FRONT OF ME?

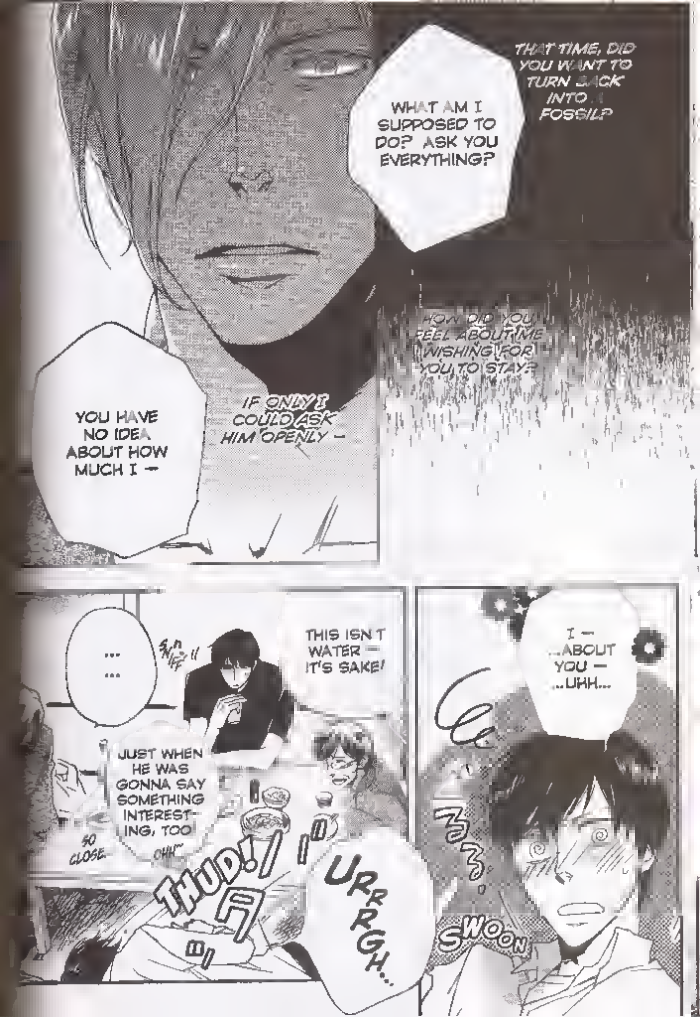

HMM...
I SEE
A STRANGE EXPRESSION CAME OVER SETSU'S FACE
SUDDENLY, I FELT ANXIOUS.
AFRAID TO HEAR ANY MORE, I QUICKLY SEALED HIS LIPS WITH MINE.

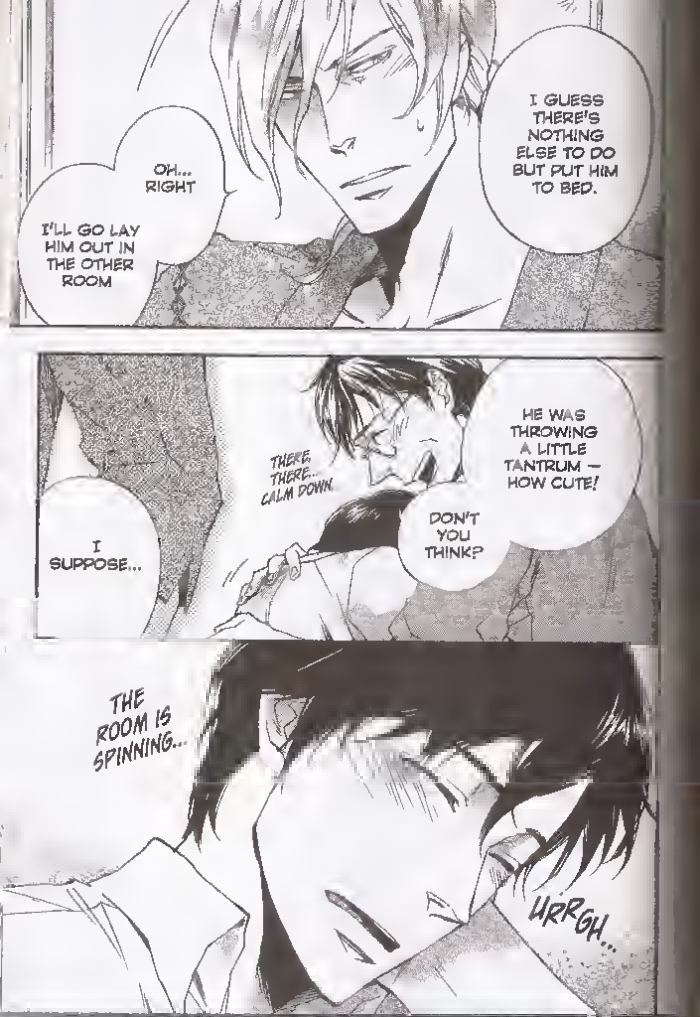

I WAS DESPERATE FOR A WAY TO KEEP HIM CONNECTED TO ME...AND I WAS SO HAPPY WHEN HE SEEMED TO WANT ME IN RETURN.
AT THE SAME TIME, I FELT SAD.
IT MADE ME REALIZE JUST HOW PRECIOUS SETSU HAD BECOME TO ME.
AND IF SETSU DISAPPEARED...
...I WOULD HAVE NO IDEA WHERE TO EVEN START LOOKING FOR HIM.

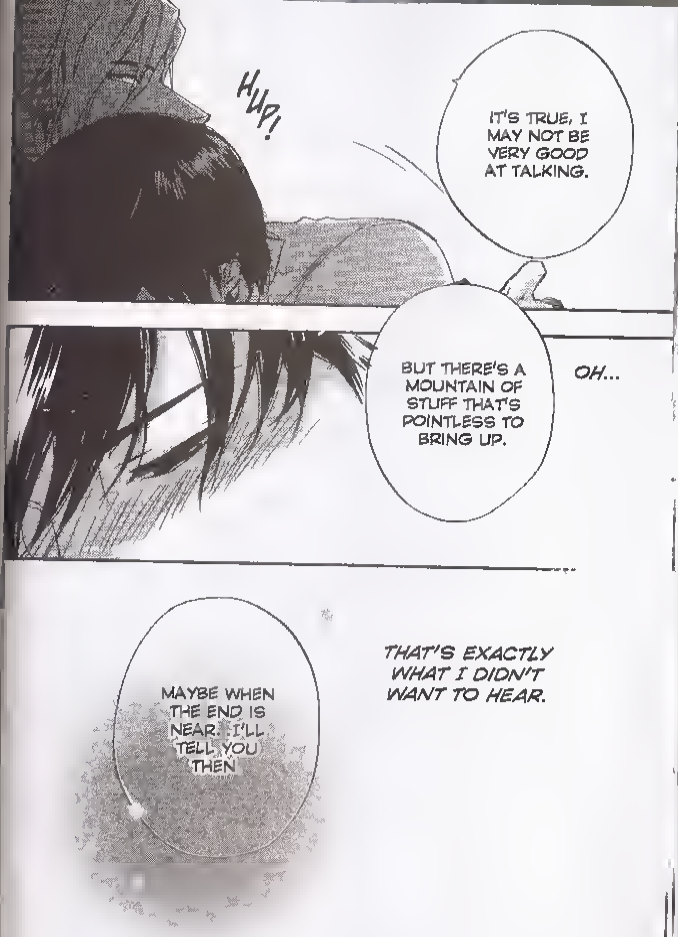
AKI —
HUH?
Y-YES?!
WHAT ARE YOU SPACING OUT FOR?
THIS MEAT IS GOOD — TRY SOME.
YOU'RE STILL AS THIN AS A STICK. EAT AND BULK UP!
...
...
...
PILE
BLUSH
HERE
HE'S SO INSENSITIVE...
AKI-KUN'S ALWAYS BEEN A LIGHT EATER.
YOU SHOULDN'T FORCE HIM


REMEMBER THAT TIME YOU STUFFED YOURSELF WITH SO MUCH EDAMAME YOU COULD HARDLY MOVE?
HA! I REMEMBER THAT!
OHH~
WATER..
I JUST LOVE THAT STUFF, THAT'S ALL!
KOFF KOFF
...
...
LEAVE ME ALONE!
HERE, DRINK SLOWLY!
DON'T, AKI
I'LL EAT IT!
URGH!
CHOKE
CHUG
TOLD YOU SO
WHAT? WHAT'S ALL THIS..?
ALL THIS STUFF I DON'T KNOW ABOUT...
OH? WHAT'S WRONG, SETSU-SAN? JEALOUS?
BLUSH
YEAH, I'M JEALOUS — GOT A PROBLEM WITH IT?
GRUMP

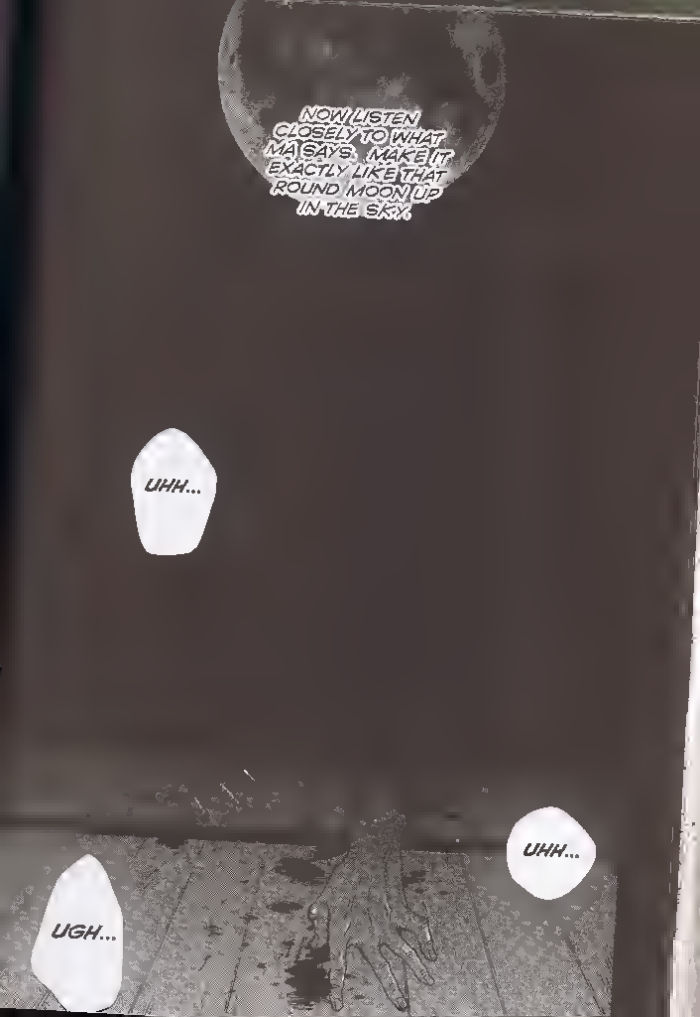
I'M SORRY...
THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO BLUSH, BRO
NOW I'M EMBARRASSED TOO...
WAIT...
I —
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
OH?
I'M THE ONE WHO KNOWS EVEN LESS ABOUT YOU!!
I STILL CAN'T TELL WHAT YOUR TRUE INTENTIONS ARE!


THAT TIME, DID YOU WANT TO TURN BACK INTO FOSSIL?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO? ASK YOU EVERYTHING?
HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT ME WISHING FOR YOU TO STAY?
IF ONLY I COULD ASK HIM OPENLY —
YOU HAVE NO IDEA ABOUT HOW MUCH I —
...
...
THIS ISN'T WATER — IT'S SAKE!
JUST WHEN HE WAS GONNA SAY SOMETHING INTERESTING, TOO!
SO CLOSE.
CHK
THUD!
URRRGH...
I — ...ABOUT YOU — ...UHH...
SWOON

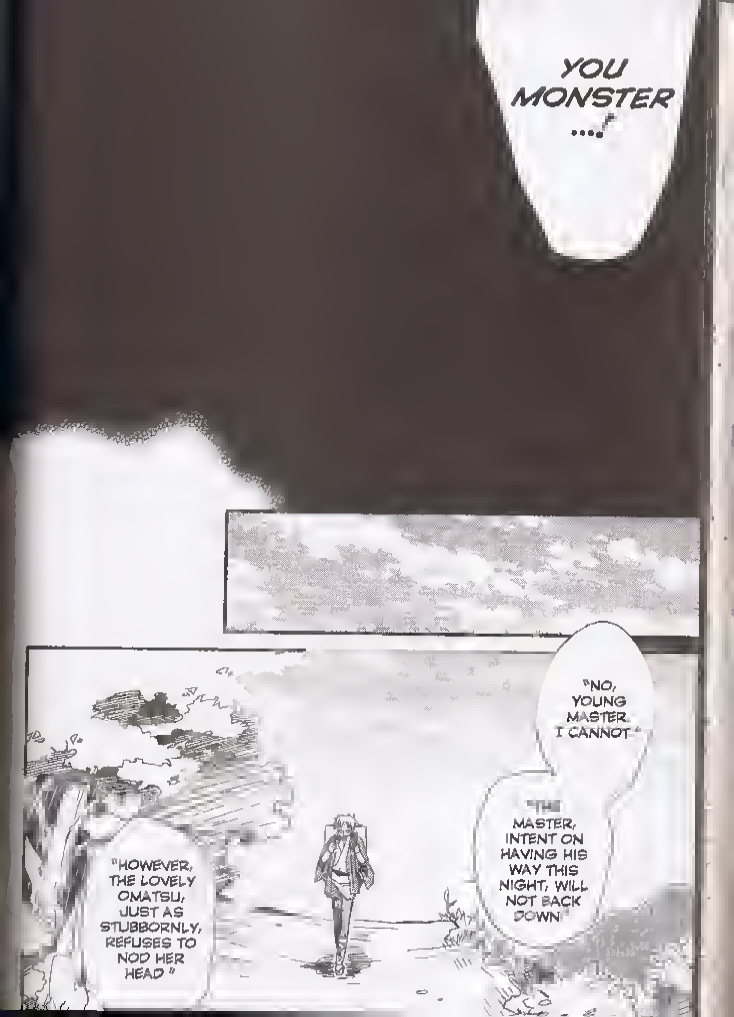

I'LL GO LAY HIM OUT IN THE OTHER ROOM
OH... RIGHT
I GUESS THERE'S NOTHING ELSE TO DO BUT PUT HIM TO BED.
I SUPPOSE...
THERE, THERE... CALM DOWN.
DON'T YOU THINK?
HE WAS THROWING A LITTLE TANTRUM — HOW CUTE!
THE ROOM IS SPINNING..
URRGH...


HUP!
IT'S TRUE, I MAY NOT BE VERY GOOD AT TALKING.
BUT THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF STUFF THAT'S POINTLESS TO BRING UP.
OH...
MAYBE WHEN THE END IS NEAR. I'LL TELL YOU THEN
THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR.

A TALE OF STRANGE EXPERIENCE
異世界閻魔録


NOW, LISTEN CLOSELY TO WHAT MA SAYS. MAKE IT EXACTLY LIKE THAT ROUND MOON UP IN THE SKY.
UHH...
UHH...
UGH...

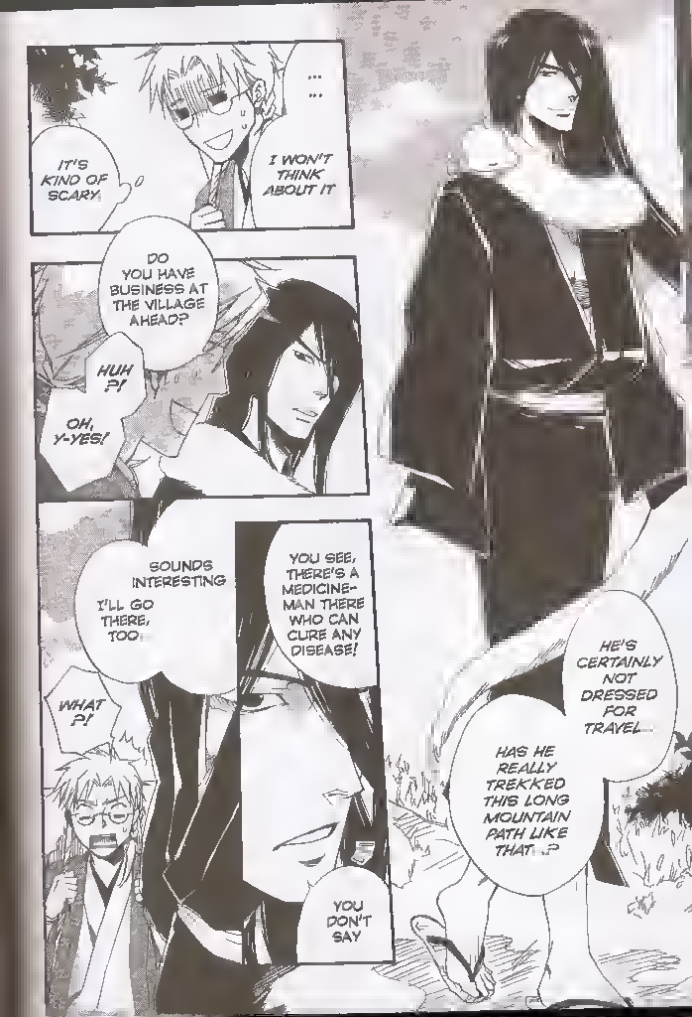
YOU —
YOU —
...I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO HELP ME...
Y-


YOU MONSTER ....
"NO, YOUNG MASTER. I CANNOT."
"THE MASTER, INTENT ON HAVING HIS WAY THIS NIGHT, WILL NOT BACK DOWN."
"HOWEVER, THE LOVELY OMATSU, JUST AS STUBBORNLY, REFUSES TO NOD HER HEAD."

"BUT AT LAST, OMATSU .." UMM — ..
HUFF
HUFF
IS IT REALLY AHEAD?
D-DID I TAKE A WRONG TURN SOME-WHERE—?
OH —
UMM —
CLANK
CLINK
I WAS TOLD I'D REACH IT IF I WALKED BUT HALF AN HOUR—
CRUMPLE
TAKACHI VILLAGE— I'M STARTING TO DOUBT IT—
"BUT AT LAST, OMATSU, FEELING LONESOME AND CONFUSED..."
"FINALLY NODDED A SMALL ASSENT"
"THE YOUNG MASTER, SUDDENLY AND MIGHTILY AROUSED, DRAGGED OMATSU INTO THE BED CHAMBER"
JAK
JAK
JAK

"NO, NO, YOUNG MASTER! YOU MUSTN'T —!"
"WHAT?! BUT DID YOU NOT JUST AGREE TO IT?!"
"!"...
UM., JUST HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN LISTENING —?
FROM THE PART WHERE OMATSU WAS ABOUT TO BE VIOLATED.
...
...
...
OMG, ARE YOU SERIOUS.

I'VE MET MANY A GUY WHO SINGS OR COMPOSES POETRY WHILE TRAVELING, BUT...
YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE I'VE MET WHO CREATES EROTIC STORIES OUT LOUD.
I WANT TO DIE.
IT'S A HOBBY OF MINE.
IT'S THE BEST THING FOR KEEPING ONE OCCUPIED!
!
HUH? NOW THAT I LOOK MORE CLOSELY
THIS MAN IS QUITE OUT OF THE ORDINARY
HE HAS A STRANGE LOOK ABOUT HIM.


...
...
I WON'T THINK ABOUT IT
IT'S KIND OF SCARY.
DO YOU HAVE BUSINESS AT THE VILLAGE AHEAD?
HUH ?!
OH, Y-YES!
YOU SEE, THERE'S A MEDICINE-MAN THERE WHO CAN CURE ANY DISEASE!
SOUNDS INTERESTING
I'LL GO THERE, TOO.
WHAT ?!
YOU DON'T SAY
HE'S CERTAINLY NOT DRESSED FOR TRAVEL...
HAS HE REALLY TREKKED THIS LONG MOUNTAIN PATH LIKE THAT...?

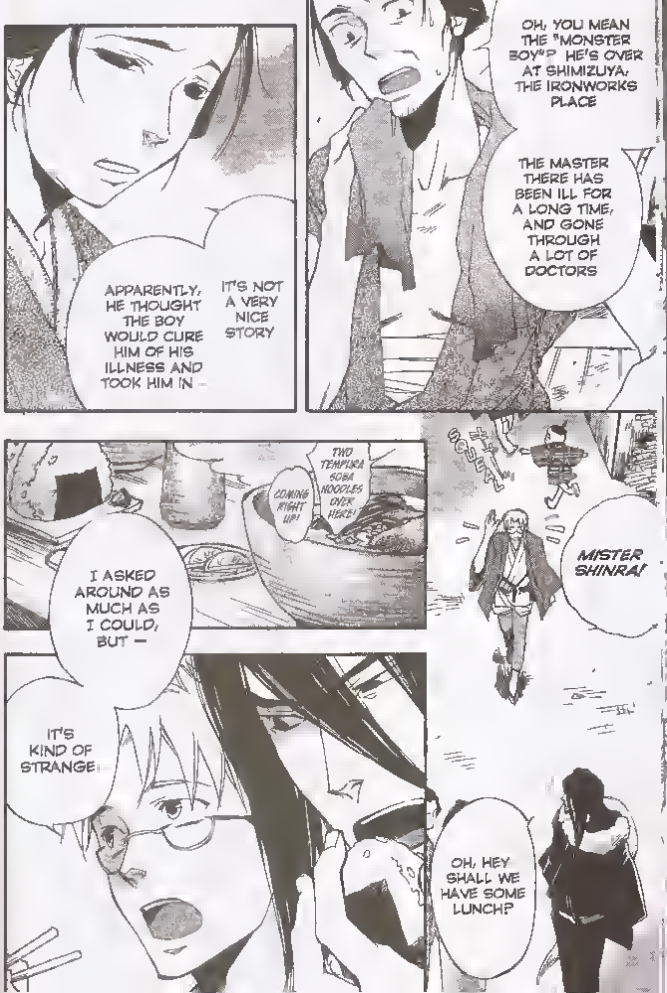
I'VE BEEN SO BORED.
YAWN
AND I WAS TIRED OF HUNTING.
O-OH...
HUNTING?
SO—
CONTINUE THE REST OF THAT STORY
WHAT?!
BUSTLE
BUSTLE

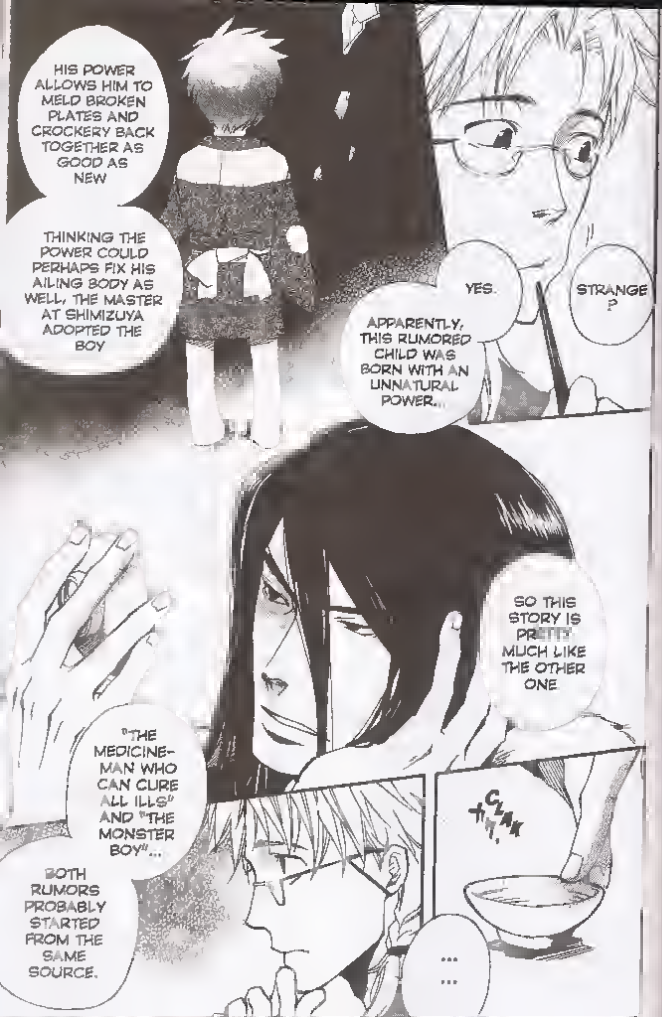
THE AIR STINKS.
THERE ARE A LOT OF SMITHS AROUND HERE.
HUH... IT'S A MORE BUSTLING PLACE THAN I EXPECTED.
I WONDER IF THEY'VE GOT SOME SORT OF LOCAL PRODUCT THEY SPECIALIZE IN?
!!
HE'S EVEN GOING TO FOLLOW ME TO MY INN?!
DON'T WORRY, I'LL PAY MY SHARE.
WELL, I GUESS THE FIRST THING IS TO FIND SOME NICE LODGINGS AND REST.
LET'S SEE...
IS THERE REALLY AN ALL-CURING PANACEA IN A PLACE LIKE THIS...?
THEN I SUPPOSE IT'S EITHER IRON OR TIN.
I'M SHINRA.
I'M JUST A DRIFTER.
I'M SAMOJI — A PEDDLER OF MEDICINE
U-UM, THEN —
WON'T YOU TELL ME YOUR NAME?

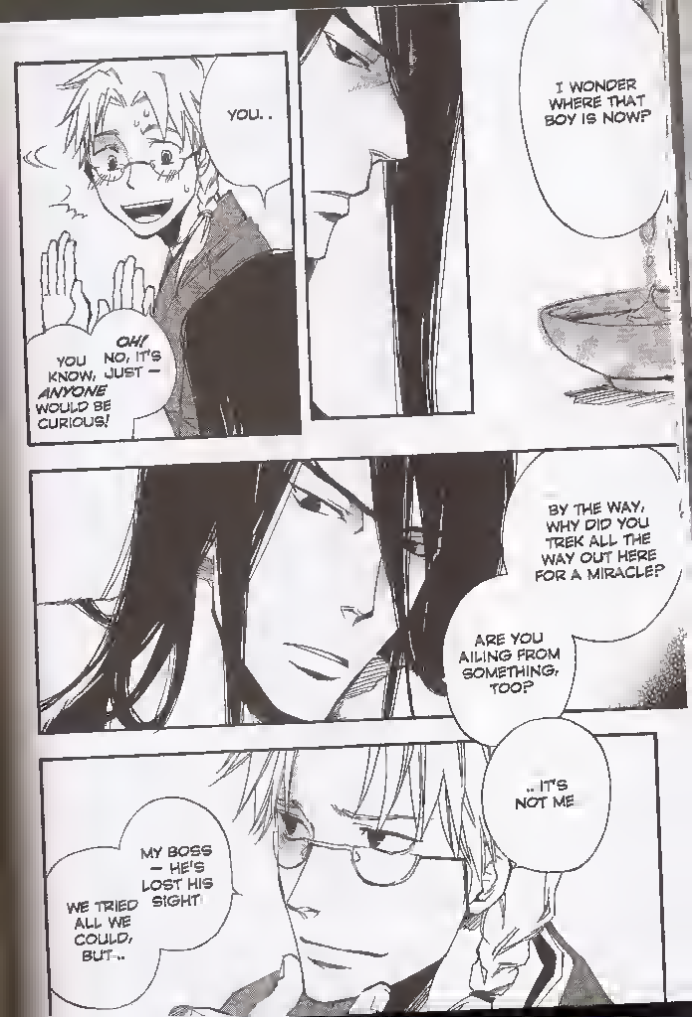
SLAT
HMMM...
WELL...
I ASKED THE PEOPLE AT THIS INN ABOUT THE ALL-CURING MEDICINE-MAN AND THEY SAID THEY'D NEVER HEARD OF HIM
WHAT IS IT?
YES APPARENTLY, A YOUNG BOY HAS SOME KIND OF FRIGHTENING SUPERNATURAL POWER THAT HE CAN KILL PEOPLE WITH
I HEAR HIS MOTHER AND A HEAD MERCHANT DIED ABOUT A MONTH AGO
IT CAUSED A GREAT STIR
THEY LAUGHED AT ME, SAYING THE LATEST RUMORS ARE ABOUT "THE LITTLE MONSTER BOY"
..MON-STER?

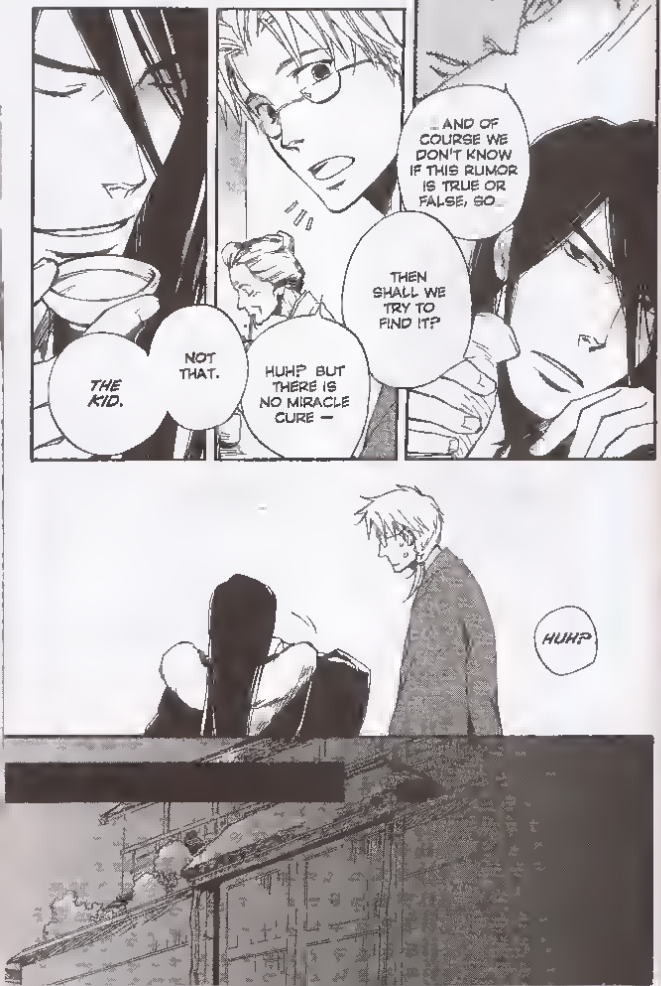
WHAT? SO IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S NOT *REALLY* A MONSTER BUT JUST A LITTLE KID, RIGHT?
W-WELL, YES, I SUPPOSE
CALLING A KID A MONSTER... THAT'S LOW.
...I DON'T LIKE IT.
CRY
YES, BUT JUST LOOK AT ME! I'M MORE DESERVING OF PITY!
SIGH
I TRAVELED FOR TWO WHOLE MONTHS JUST TO GET TO THIS VILLAGE
AND FOR *WHAT?* *A FALSE RUMOR!* I'LL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF MY PEERS AND MY BOSS!
HEY, HEY —
HOW CAN YOU SAY IT'S COMPLETELY FALSE WHEN YOU'VE ONLY ASKED AROUND A LITTLE BIT?
MAYBE THE STORY JUST GOT EXAGGERATED AS IT MADE ITS WAY TO YOUR EARS
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT
THAT'S TRUE.

...AM I TO UNDERSTAND THAT YOU'RE INCLUDING ME IN YOUR INVESTIGATION?
HA! HA!!
YOU SAID YOU'RE BORED, RIGHT?
FROM THE WAY YOU TALK...
THEN WE'LL START INVESTIGATING FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING!
THEY WORK GREAT FOR TIRED, BLEARY EYES. WE HAD IT MADE BY A SPECIALIST!
YOU PLACE THEM IN THE EYES, LIKE THIS.
WHATEVER.
...BUT EYE DROPS?
I CAN'T REWARD YOU WITH MUCH, BUT...
OH, I KNOW! I'LL GIVE YOU OUR SHOP'S EYE DROPS!
COMPLETELY SHOCKED!
IT'S ONE OF OUR BEST-SELLING PRODUCTS.
OH, SIR, YOU'RE SO OVER-DRAMATIC!
...!
IT'S STINGING HIS EYES.
TH-THRASH
THRASH


OH, YOU MEAN THE "MONSTER BOY"? HE'S OVER AT SHIMIZUYA, THE IRONWORKS PLACE
THE MASTER THERE HAS BEEN ILL FOR A LONG TIME, AND GONE THROUGH A LOT OF DOCTORS
IT'S NOT A VERY NICE STORY
APPARENTLY, HE THOUGHT THE BOY WOULD CURE HIM OF HIS ILLNESS AND TOOK HIM IN —
SCRUNCH
MISTER SHINRA!
TWO TEMPURA SOBA NOODLES OVER HERE!
COMING RIGHT UP!
I ASKED AROUND AS MUCH AS I COULD, BUT —
IT'S KIND OF STRANGE.
OH, HEY SHALL WE HAVE SOME LUNCH?

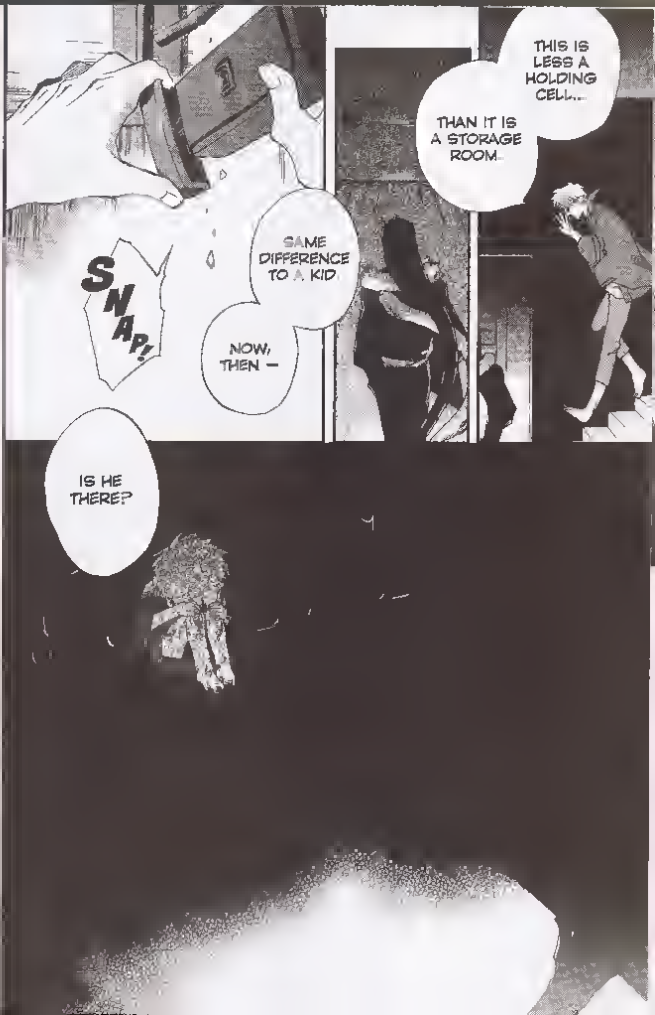

HIS POWER ALLOWS HIM TO MELD BROKEN PLATES AND CROCKERY BACK TOGETHER AS GOOD AS NEW
THINKING THE POWER COULD PERHAPS FIX HIS AILING BODY AS WELL, THE MASTER AT SHIMIZUYA ADOPTED THE BOY
STRANGE?
YES.
APPARENTLY, THIS RUMORED CHILD WAS BORN WITH AN UNNATURAL POWER...
SO THIS STORY IS PRETTY MUCH LIKE THE OTHER ONE
"THE MEDICINE-MAN WHO CAN CURE ALL ILLS" AND "THE MONSTER BOY"...
BOTH RUMORS PROBABLY STARTED FROM THE SAME SOURCE.
CLANK
...
...

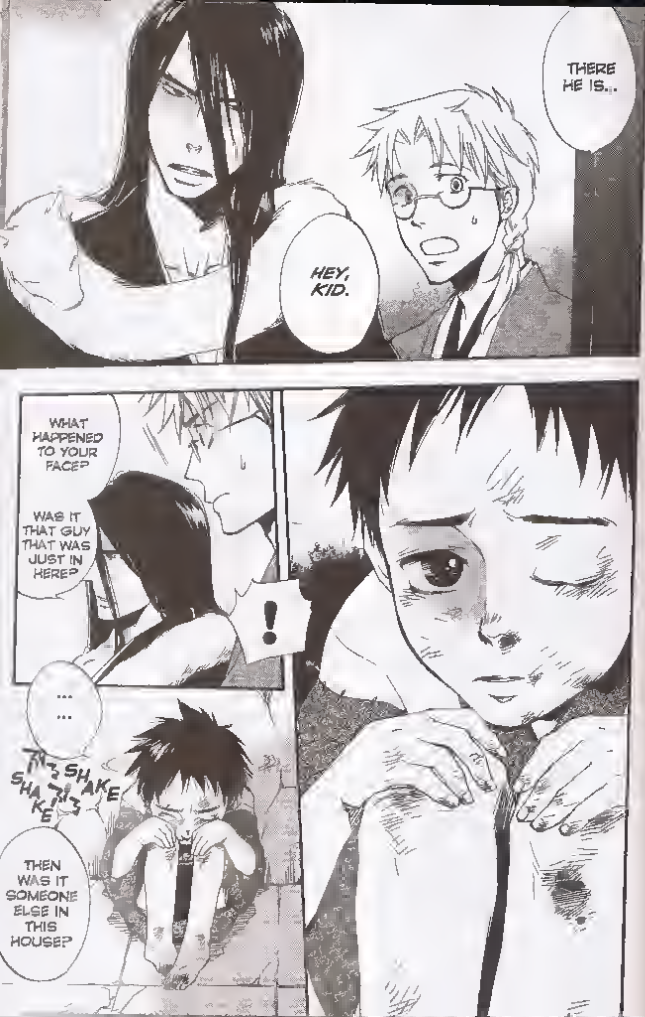

I WONDER WHERE THAT BOY IS NOW?
YOU. .
OH! NO, IT'S JUST — ANYONE WOULD BE CURIOUS!
YOU KNOW,
BY THE WAY, WHY DID YOU TREK ALL THE WAY OUT HERE FOR A MIRACLE?
ARE YOU AILING FROM SOMETHING, TOO?
.. IT'S NOT ME
MY BOSS — HE'S LOST HIS SIGHT!
WE TRIED ALL WE COULD, BUT..


...AND OF COURSE WE DON'T KNOW IF THIS RUMOR IS TRUE OR FALSE, SO...
THEN SHALL WE TRY TO FIND IT?
HUH? BUT THERE IS NO MIRACLE CURE —
NOT THAT.
THE KID.
HUH?

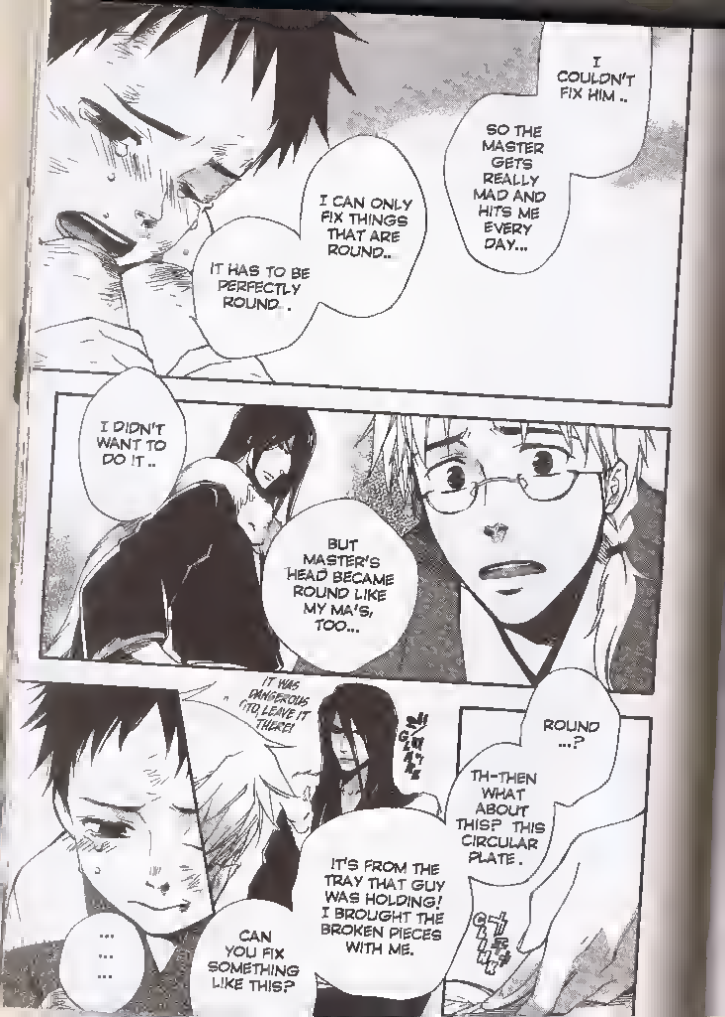
WHAT CARELESS HOUSEHOLDS THERE ARE IN THESE DANGEROUS TIMES
PIECE OF CAKE
"PIECE OF CAKE"...?
SLAT
NOW, WHERE IS THE KID IN QUESTION?
WHAT A MESS I'M MIXED UP WITH...
YES, BUT...
KUTHWAA
YOU'VE BEEN KNOCKING OUT EVERY RESIDENT WE'VE RUN INTO LEFT AND RIGHT!
AND IT WAS ALL A PIECE OF CAKE, NO?
HMM- A BIG MANSION LIKE THIS USUALLY HAS ONE.
WAIT FOR ME!

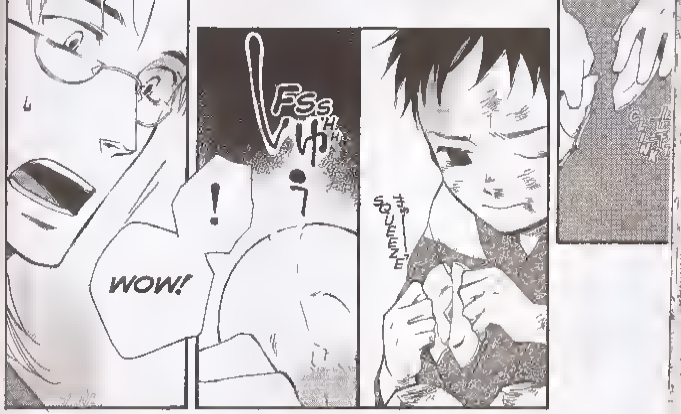
OH, HEY, YOU THERE!
PARDON ME...
HUH?
THERE SHOULD BE A HOLDING CELL SOMEWHERE AROUND HERE — DO YOU KNOW WHERE?
OH, IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THAT, IT'S JUST THROUGH THAT DOOR I CAME OUT OF—
THANKS!
THUD!
!
TH-TH-THAT WAS DANGEROUS—
AH, FOUND IT.
LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT.
YIKES!

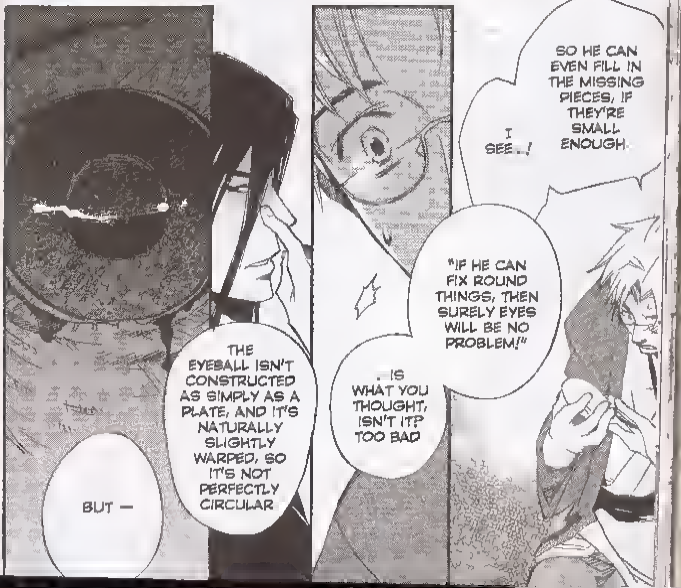

THIS IS LESS A HOLDING CELL...
THAN IT IS A STORAGE ROOM...
SNAP!
SAME DIFFERENCE TO A KID
NOW, THEN —
IS HE THERE?

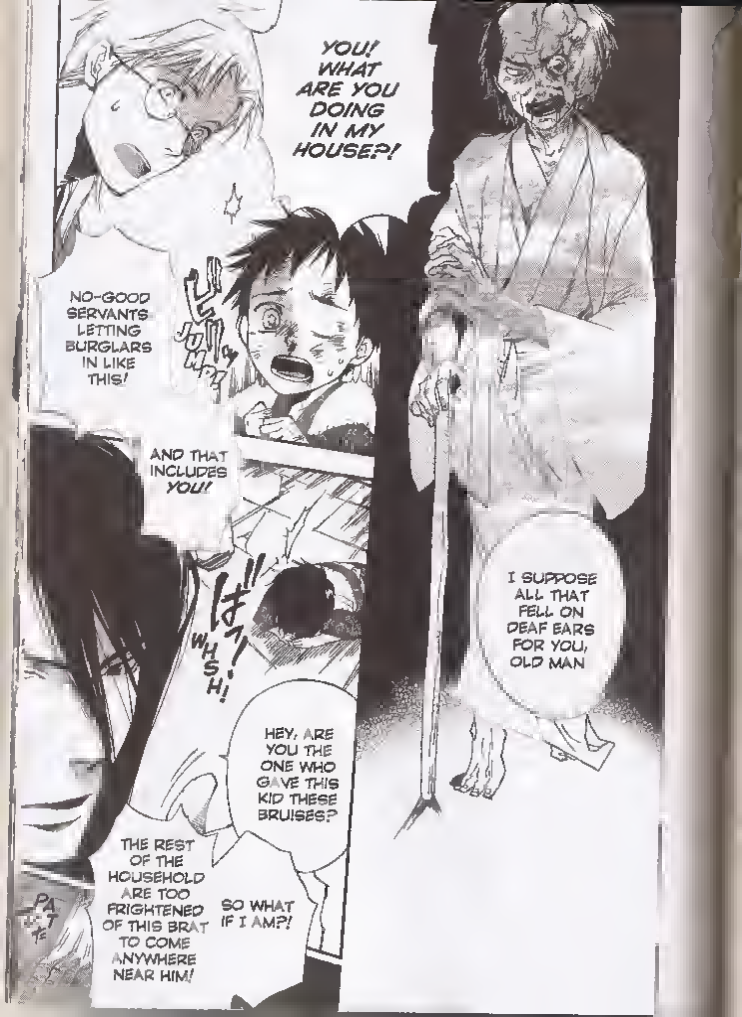

THERE HE IS..
HEY, KID.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FACE?
WAS IT THAT GUY THAT WAS JUST IN HERE?
!
...
...
SHAKE SHAKE
THEN WAS IT SOMEONE ELSE IN THIS HOUSE?

SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE
HEY-HEY...
WE DIDN'T COME HERE TO BULLY YOU, YOU KNOW
FLINCH!
WAIT-WAIT, MISTER SHINRA!
YOU LOOK TOO SCARY!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
HEY... ARE YOU THE LITTLE BOY WITH THE STRANGE POWERS?
WHO DID THIS HORRIBLE THING TO YOU?
DON'T YOU WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE?
TWITCH
TCH!
DID THE MASTER SAY...
.. I COULD COME OUT?
WHAT?
YOUR "MASTER" IS STILL ALIVE?
SOB


I COULDN'T FIX HIM ..
SO THE MASTER GETS REALLY MAD AND HITS ME EVERY DAY...
I CAN ONLY FIX THINGS THAT ARE ROUND..
IT HAS TO BE PERFECTLY ROUND..
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT..
BUT MASTER'S HEAD BECAME ROUND LIKE MY MA'S, TOO...
IT WAS DANGEROUS TO LEAVE IT THERE!
ROUND ...?
TH-THEN WHAT ABOUT THIS? THIS CIRCULAR PLATE.
IT'S FROM THE TRAY THAT GUY WAS HOLDING! I BROUGHT THE BROKEN PIECES WITH ME.
CAN YOU FIX SOMETHING LIKE THIS?
...
...
...


WOW!
!
FSs
SQUEEZE


BUT —
THE EYEBALL ISN'T CONSTRUCTED AS SIMPLY AS A PLATE, AND IT'S NATURALLY SLIGHTLY WARPED, SO IT'S NOT PERFECTLY CIRCULAR
. . . IS WHAT YOU THOUGHT, ISN'T IT? TOO BAD
"IF HE CAN FIX ROUND THINGS, THEN SURELY EYES WILL BE NO PROBLEM!"
I SEE . . !
SO HE CAN EVEN FILL IN THE MISSING PIECES, IF THEY'RE SMALL ENOUGH.


YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN MY HOUSE?!
NO-GOOD SERVANTS LETTING BURGLARS IN LIKE THIS!
AND THAT INCLUDES YOU!
I SUPPOSE ALL THAT FELL ON DEAF EARS FOR YOU, OLD MAN
WHSH!
HEY, ARE YOU THE ONE WHO GAVE THIS KID THESE BRUISES?
THE REST OF THE HOUSEHOLD ARE TOO FRIGHTENED OF THIS BRAT TO COME ANYWHERE NEAR HIM!
SO WHAT IF I AM?!

MY SKULL AND EYEBALL, INFLATED AND IN HORRIBLE PAIN...!
THIS BOY IS A MONSTER! AND NOW HE'S MADE ME A MONSTER, TOO!
NOT ONLY COULD HE NOT FIX MY EYE, BUT HE DID THIS TO ME!
HUH...? WAIT!
WELL, I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM FEEL THIS PAIN, TOO!!
I'LL BEAT HIM NOW WHILE HE'S STILL A HELPLESS BRAT, THEN I'LL KILL HIM!!
WHSH!
WATCH OUT!
!!

SNAP!
DID YOU SAY "MONSTER"...
...OLD MAN?
YOU HAVE NO CLUE
CLAMP!

ZZZT
WHAM!
THIS IS WHAT A *REAL* MONSTER LOOKS LIKE.
SLIP
GAH!

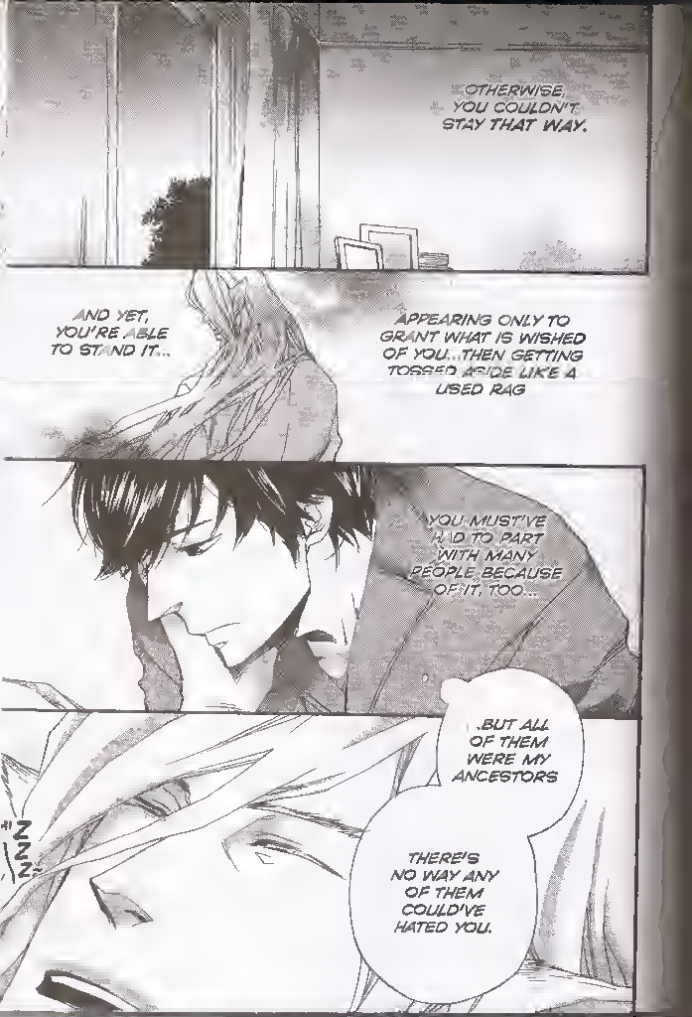
GOT IT?
UH... WHA-... HUH?!
N-NO! DON'T! YOU MUSTN'T!!
NOW,
WHAT SHALL I DO? KILL HIM?

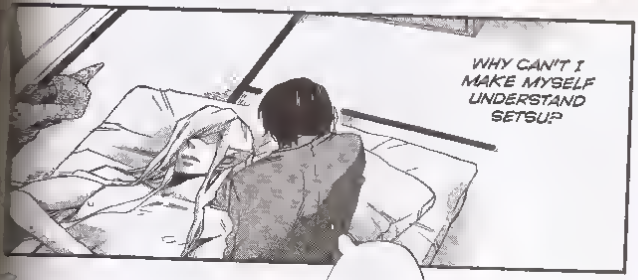
TH-THAT MAY BE TRUE..
THIS GUY WAS PLANNING ON BEATING THAT KID TO DEATH. HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO LIVE.
WHY NOT?
HOW BORING
SIR, TELL HIM! YOU MADE YOUR OWN CHOICE, DIDN'T YOU?! YOU GAMBLED ON THIS CHILD'S POWER!
THE CHOICE WAS YOURS! YOU MUST LIVE WITH THE CONSE-QUENCES, NO MATTER HOW PAINFUL!!
THAT MAN WAS JUST TAKING HIS ANGER OUT ON THE WRONG TARGET!
BUT IF YOU KILL HIM, IT'S NO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT HE WAS PLANNING TO DO!
I'M SORRY..
U-UHH... DAMN.. DAMN IT..
UHH...
THUD
YOU HEARD HIM
YOU'RE TO BE SPARED

I'M SORRY..
I'M SORRY..
I PROMISE I'LL TRY TO FIX OTHER THINGS... EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT ROUND. I PROMISE TO FIX YOU PROPERLY ONE DAY...
I'M SORRY... I'M SORRY...
WELL, GUESS IT'S TIME TO HEAD BACK THE WAY WE CAME
YES..
BUT...

...THAT MAN FORCED US TO TAKE THE BOY.
EH.. IT'S FINE.
YOU WORK FOR A SUPPLIER OF MEDICINE. SURELY YOU MUST BE INTERESTED IN HIS POWER, RIGHT? HE'LL BE A GREAT ASSET TO YOUR SHOP.
HUH?! WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAP!!
BESIDES, THE MORE THE MERRIER WHEN ONE IS TRAVELING!
RIGHT ?!
DO YOU PLAN ON FOLLOWING ME ALL THE WAY BACK?!
P-PLEASE— ANYTHING BUT THAT!
ACTUALLY, I'D LIKE YOU TO TELL ME MORE ABOUT YOURSELF —
I'VE GOT TIME TO KILL, ANYWAY.
AND I'D LIKE TO HEAR MORE OF THOSE EROTIC TALES OF YOURS
HEY! IF YOU'RE GOING TO FOLLOW ME, PLEASE SLOW DOWN! WAIT!!
A TALE OF STRANGE EXPERIENCE / END

IT MUST BE HIS PERSONALITY.

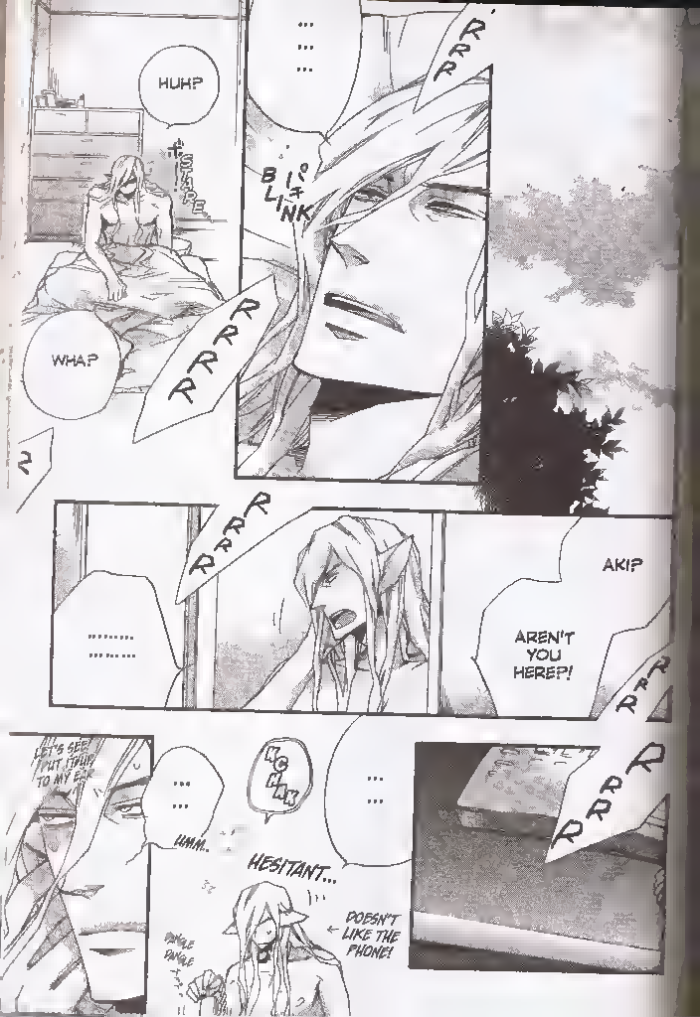

OTHERWISE, YOU COULDN'T STAY THAT WAY.
AND YET, YOU'RE ABLE TO STAND IT...
APPEARING ONLY TO GRANT WHAT IS WISHED OF YOU...THEN GETTING TOSSED ASIDE LIKE A USED RAG
YOU MUST'VE HAD TO PART WITH MANY PEOPLE BECAUSE OF IT, TOO...
...BUT ALL OF THEM WERE MY ANCESTORS
THERE'S NO WAY ANY OF THEM COULD'VE HATED YOU.
ZZZ...

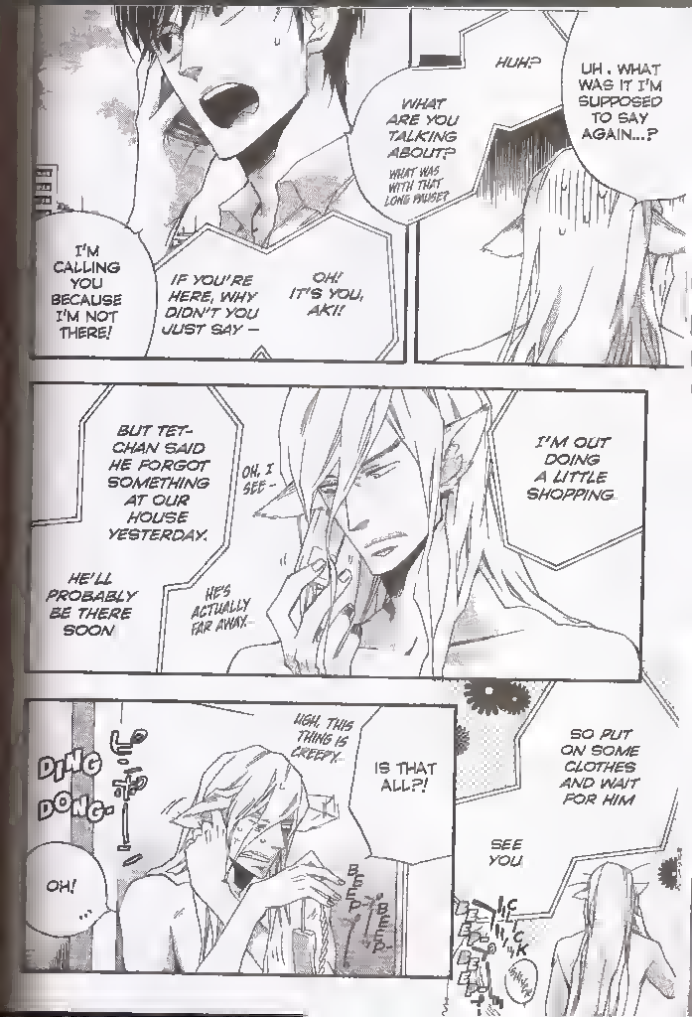



IT'S LIKE...

I'M HANGING IN MID-AIR.

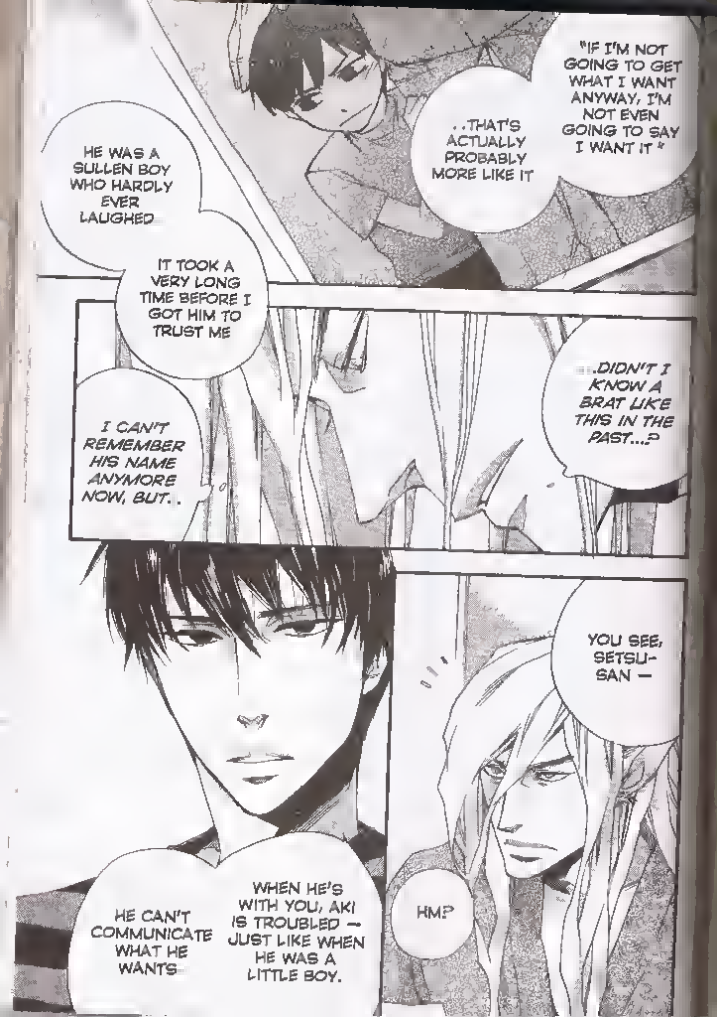
"MAYBE WHEN THE END IS NEAR, I'LL TELL YOU THEN."

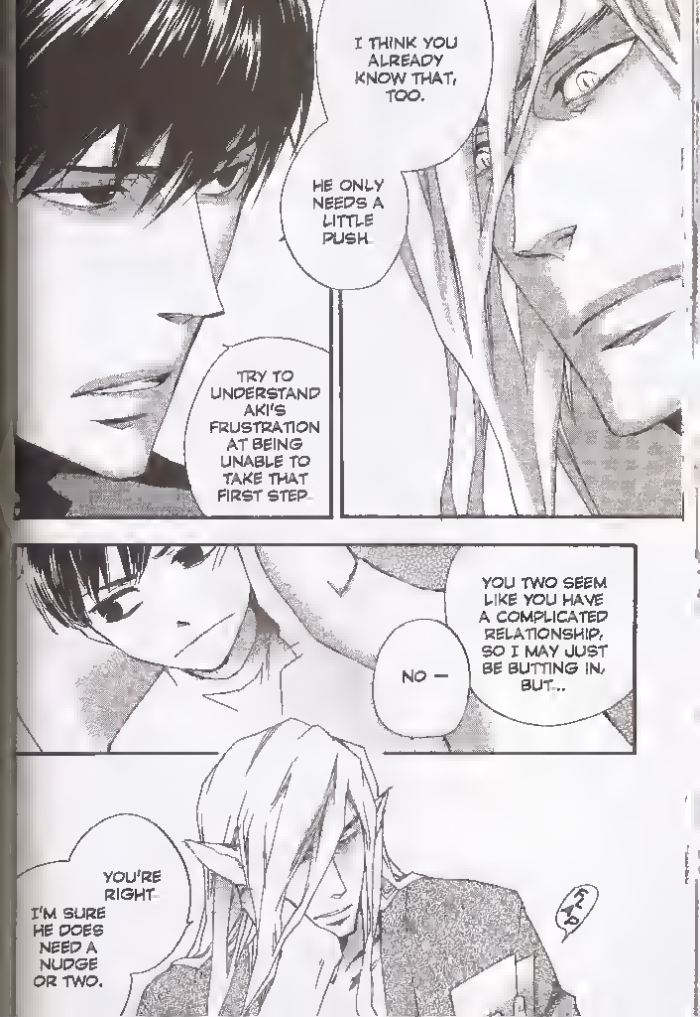

HUH?
SHAPE
BLINK
...
...
...
RRR
WHA?
RRRR
RRRR
2
AKI?
AREN'T YOU HERE?!
.....
.....
RRRR
R*R*R
LET'S SEE... PUT THIS TO MY EAR
...
...
UMM..
HESITANT...
DOESN'T LIKE THE PHONE!
...
...
RRRR
PANIC PANIC

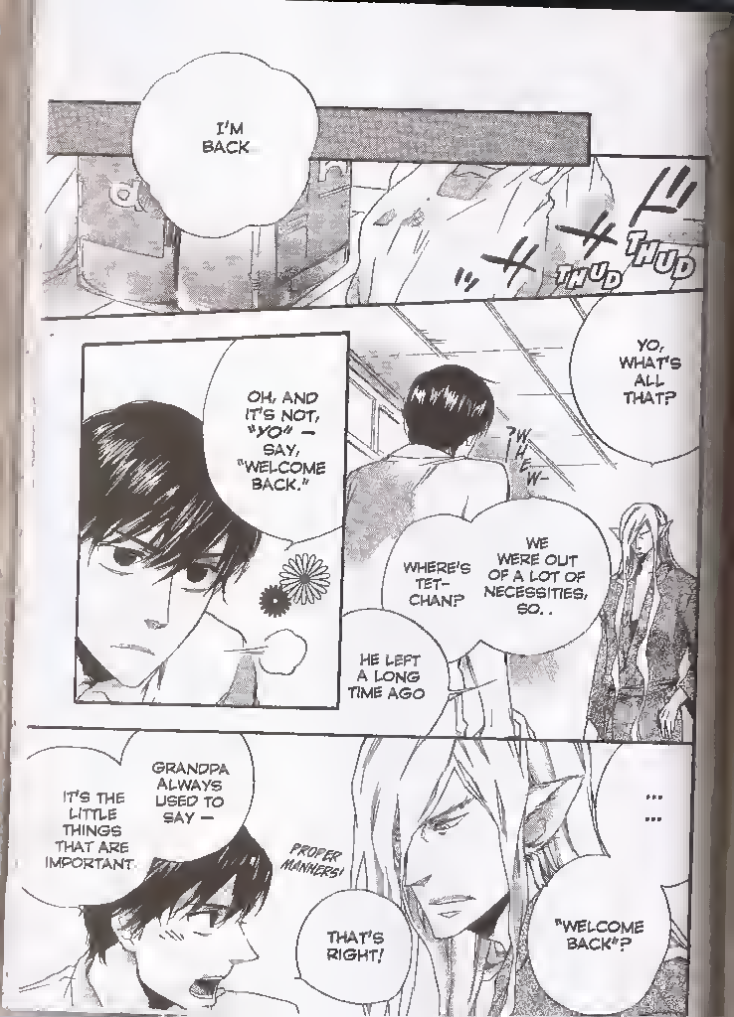

I'M CALLING YOU BECAUSE I'M NOT THERE!
IF YOU'RE HERE, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SAY —
OH! IT'S YOU, AKI!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT WAS WITH THAT LONG PAUSE?
HUH?
UH. WHAT WAS IT I'M SUPPOSED TO SAY AGAIN...?
BUT TET-CHAN SAID HE FORGOT SOMETHING AT OUR HOUSE YESTERDAY.
HE'LL PROBABLY BE THERE SOON
OH, I SEE —
HE'S ACTUALLY FAR AWAY.
I'M OUT DOING A LITTLE SHOPPING.
DING DONG-
OH! ...
HIGH, THIS THING IS CREEPY.
IS THAT ALL?!
BEEP BEEP
SO PUT ON SOME CLOTHES AND WAIT FOR HIM
SEE YOU
CLICK

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WHEN YOU'RE RESTING. MAY I COME IN?
OH, IT'S YOU, BRO!
SURE, COME ON IN. IT'S JUST ME, THOUGH.
I CAME BECAUSE I'D HEARD AKI IS OUT.
THAT'S ACTUALLY MORE CONVENIENT.
HM?
THERE ARE SOME THINGS I'VE WANTED TO ASK YOU, SETSU-SAN.
WHAT, ABOUT THE SAKE AGAIN?
HA HA
—MANY THINGS.
SO YOU'RE IN THAT FORM TODAY?
THE EARS, YOU MEAN?
NO, IN GENERAL...
AND SO I'VE COME PREPARED WITH THESE.
S...
PLEASE, TAKE THEM.

HUH? ARE THESE —
THEY'RE PROBABLY FROM WHEN AKI FIRST CAME OVER HERE.
OVER HERE?
YES, HE MOVED OUT HERE FROM THE CENTER OF THE CITY
CITY ?
HIS PARENTS DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT, SO HE CAME HERE ALONE
MY GRANDFATHER AND HIS WERE GOOD FRIENDS
SO I USED TO COME OVER AND PLAY AT THIS HOUSE
YOU SEE, EVER SINCE HE WAS LITTLE..
EVEN WHEN AKI WANTS SOMETHING, HE NEVER TELLS ANYONE

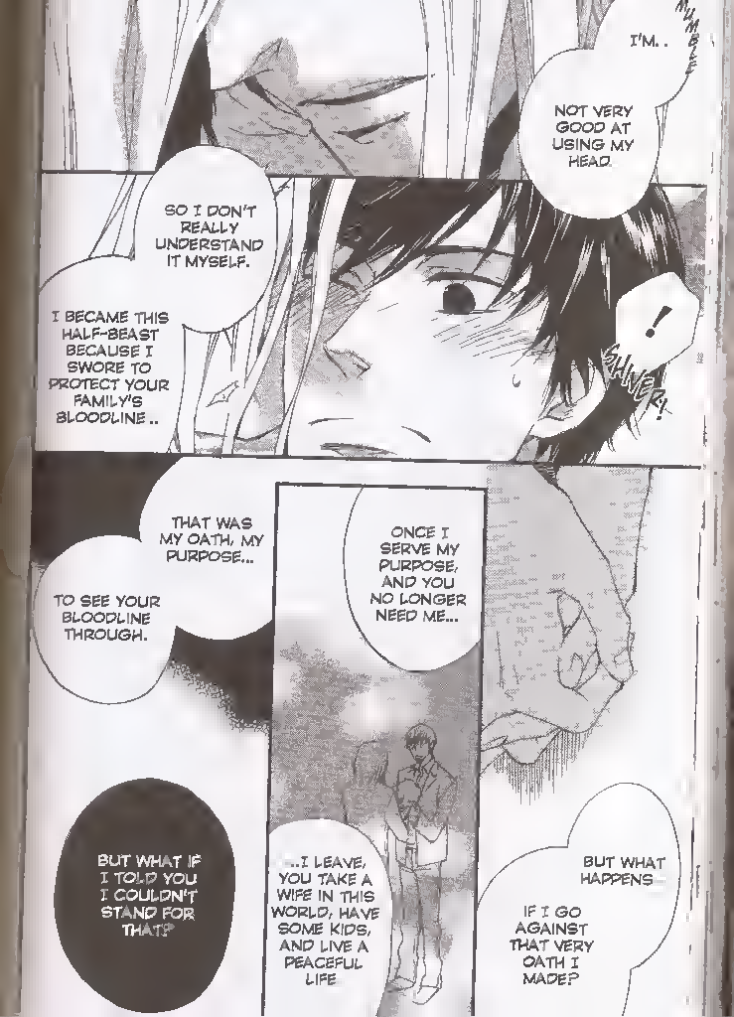

"IF I'M NOT GOING TO GET WHAT I WANT ANYWAY, I'M NOT EVEN GOING TO SAY I WANT IT."
..THAT'S ACTUALLY PROBABLY MORE LIKE IT
HE WAS A SULLEN BOY WHO HARDLY EVER LAUGHED
IT TOOK A VERY LONG TIME BEFORE I GOT HIM TO TRUST ME
I CAN'T REMEMBER HIS NAME ANYMORE NOW, BUT..
..DIDN'T I KNOW A BRAT LIKE THIS IN THE PAST...?
YOU SEE, SETSU-SAN —
HM?
WHEN HE'S WITH YOU, AKI IS TROUBLED — JUST LIKE WHEN HE WAS A LITTLE BOY.
HE CAN'T COMMUNICATE WHAT HE WANTS

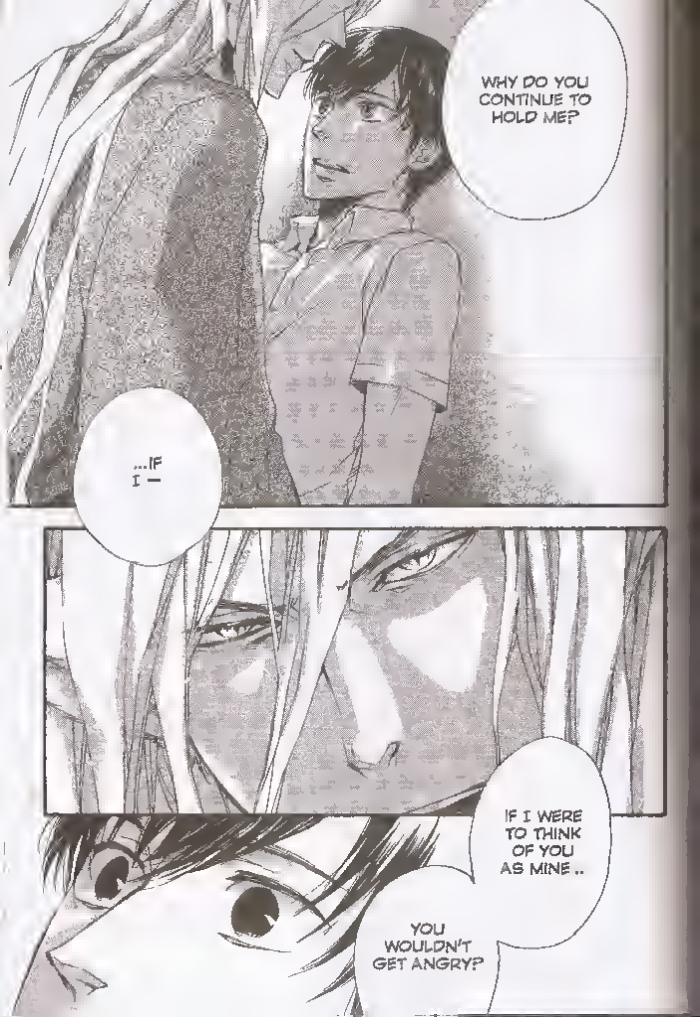

I THINK YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT, TOO.
HE ONLY NEEDS A LITTLE PUSH.
TRY TO UNDERSTAND AKI'S FRUSTRATION AT BEING UNABLE TO TAKE THAT FIRST STEP.
YOU TWO SEEM LIKE YOU HAVE A COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP, SO I MAY JUST BE BUTTING IN, BUT...
NO —
YOU'RE RIGHT. I'M SURE HE DOES NEED A NUDGE OR TWO.
??


I'M BACK
THUD
THUD
YO, WHAT'S ALL THAT?
?W-H-E-W-
OH, AND IT'S NOT, "YO" — SAY, "WELCOME BACK."
WHERE'S TET-CHAN?
WE WERE OUT OF A LOT OF NECESSITIES, SO. .
HE LEFT A LONG TIME AGO
...
...
"WELCOME BACK"?
THAT'S RIGHT!
PROPER MANNERS!
GRANDPA ALWAYS USED TO SAY —
IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT ARE IMPORTANT.

I THOUGHT I'D COOK UP A BUNCH OF SIDE-DISHES TO STOCK UP THE FREEZER
I BOUGHT A TON OF VEGETABLES, TOO
I'LL MAKE YOU SOMETHING, TOO, IF YOU WANT —
WHA-...
GRIP
GRIP
THUD
...HUH?

BEFORE YOU GOT DRUNK AND PASSED OUT —
YOU STARTED TO SAY SOMETHING
WHAT ARE YOU ...?
YESTERDAY...
BLUSH.
WHA-...!
I WANT TO HEAR THE REST OF IT.
LET GO, YOU JERK!
LET GO OF MY HANDS!
QUIT FOOLING AROUND!
YIPE

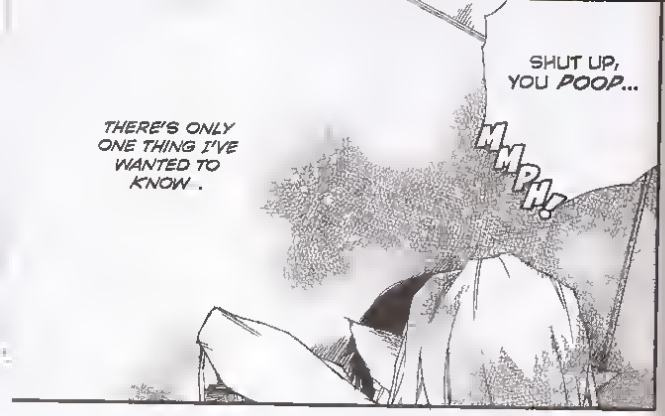

I'M..
NOT VERY GOOD AT USING MY HEAD.
SO I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND IT MYSELF.
I BECAME THIS HALF-BEAST BECAUSE I SWORE TO PROTECT YOUR FAMILY'S BLOODLINE..
SHIVER!
!
THAT WAS MY OATH, MY PURPOSE...
TO SEE YOUR BLOODLINE THROUGH.
ONCE I SERVE MY PURPOSE, AND YOU NO LONGER NEED ME...
BUT WHAT IF I TOLD YOU I COULDN'T STAND FOR THAT?
..I LEAVE, YOU TAKE A WIFE IN THIS WORLD, HAVE SOME KIDS, AND LIVE A PEACEFUL LIFE
BUT WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO AGAINST THAT VERY OATH I MADE?


WHY DO YOU CONTINUE TO HOLD ME?
...IF I —
IF I WERE TO THINK OF YOU AS MINE ..
YOU WOULDN'T GET ANGRY?

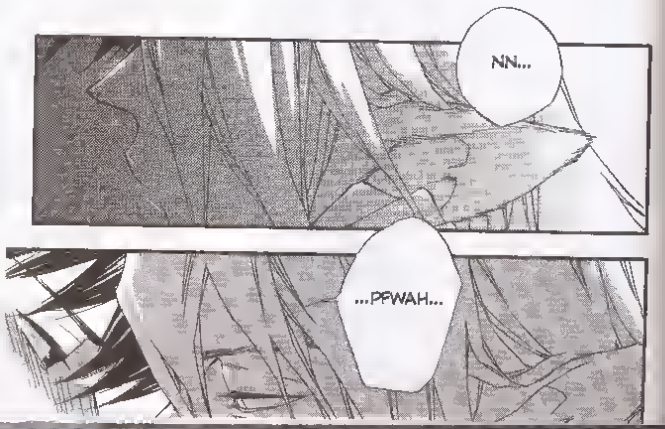
SLIP...
...
..HUH?
YOU OKAY?
MY EARS FEEL HOT.
MY FACE FEELS HOT.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?
CAN YOU STAND UP?
THE PALMS OF HIS HANDS ON MINE FEEL HOT
SETSU —
SETSU ⇨
THWAP
I —
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT —...!

I WAS YOURS...
FROM THE FIRST TIME YOU HELD ME!
AND...
YOU'RE A JERK...
BUT YOU'RE ALSO KIND..
YOU HAVE THIS SWEET SCENT.
AND I CAN'T GET AWAY FROM YOU..
AND NOW IT JUST FEELS GOOD BEING WITH YOU...

HOW COULD I NOT LOVE YOU?
THERE'S NO WAY!
I BELONGED TO YOU A LONG TIME AGO!
YOU POOP-HEAD!
GRAB!
!
WHAT THE?! IS THIS REALLY THE TIME TO CALL ME A "POOP-HEAD"?
IN *THIS* SITUATION?
EH?




...AND THAT'S HOW YOU REALLY FEEL ABOUT ME



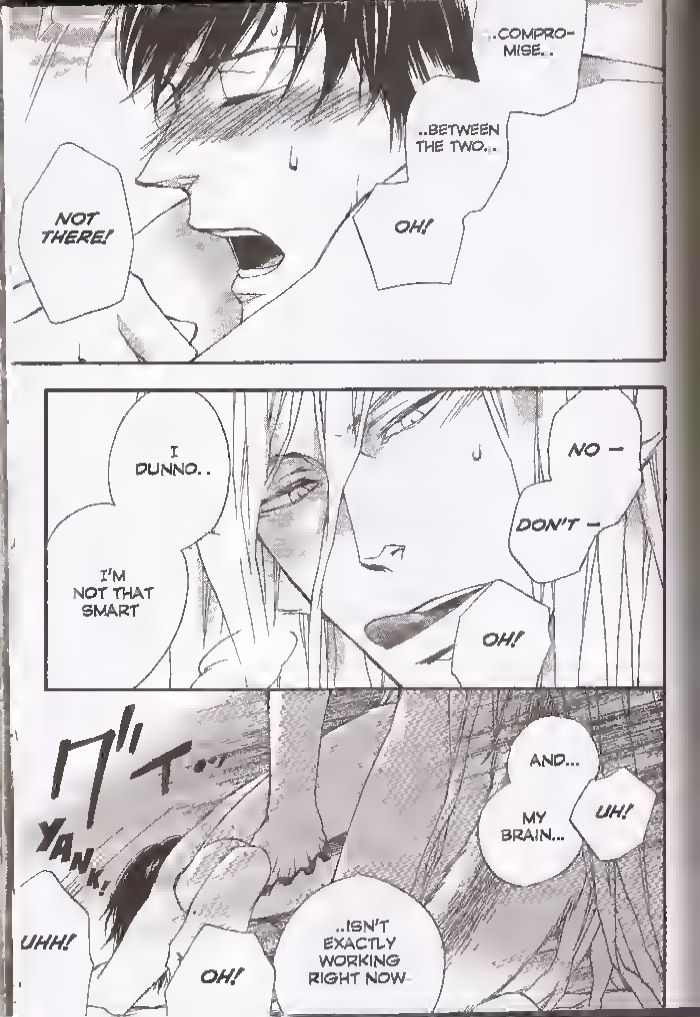
LOOK AT YOU DOWN HERE...
DO YOU STILL WANT TO STOCK UP THE FREEZER INSTEAD?
THE FUTONS...
THEY'RE STILL LAID OUT FROM THIS MORNING.
RIGHT NOW, I'M SURPRISED AT HOW HAPPY I FEEL
-HAH-
UHH...

-HAH-
-HAH-
OH —
UHH!
LICK
HE'S .
HE'S GOING SO SLOWLY TODAY.
IT'S DRIVING ME CRAZY.
SHIVER SHIVER
UNNH
SQUELCH
SQUISH

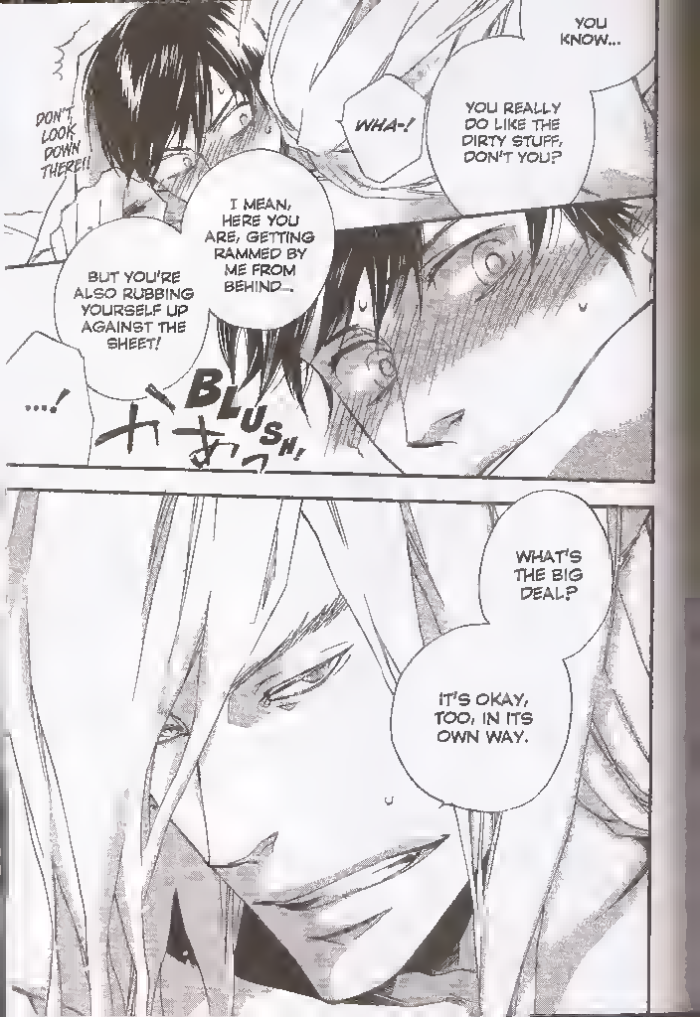
SHUDDER
SHUDDER
SQUIRT
OOH —
YOU CAME AGAIN
DRIP
DRIP
...!
I..
I NEED TO REST...
NAWLT
MRGH!
BUT I'M NOT DONE YET.
JUST A BIT MORE.
SIGH-
YOU CAN KEEP MOVING ..
AS LONG AS YOU GO SLOW.
POUF
I'M SO TIRED—

N.
YEAH...
I CAN LEAVE IT IN?
-HAH-
-HAH-
I DON'T WANT YOU TO PULL OUT...
URK!
GRR!
NO, I'VE GOT TO CONTROL MYSELF!
Y- YOU...!
AFTER YOU SAID YOU NEED TO REST...!!
HUH?
DID HE JUST GET HARDER?

I WONDER...
WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO...?
ZZT...
SZZT..
YOU LITTLE RUNT
LICK
SETSU ...?
HM?
UMM...
THE THINGS YOU WANT TO DO.
-HAH-
UH..
-HAH-
-HAH-
HOW SHOULD I...
SQUELCH
AND...
WHAT I WANT —
OH!

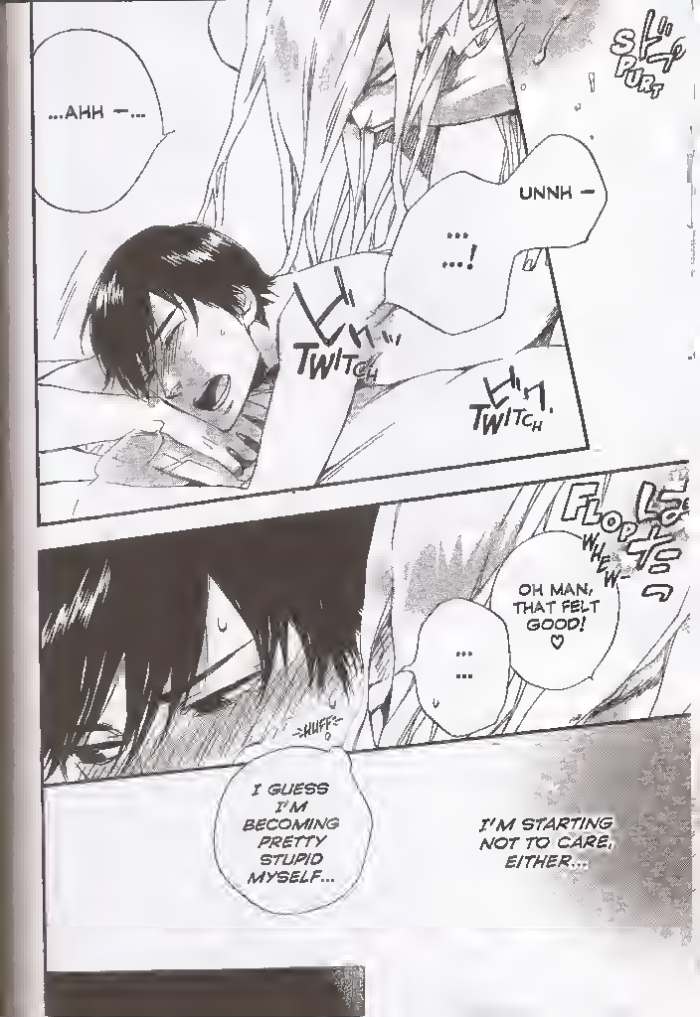

..COMPRO-
MISE..
..BETWEEN
THE TWO..
NOT
THERE!
OH!
I
DUNNO..
I'M
NOT THAT
SMART
NO —
DON'T —
OH!
AND...
MY
BRAIN...
UH!
YANK!
UHH!
OH!
..ISN'T
EXACTLY
WORKING
RIGHT NOW-

RAM!
...THAT'S ALL YOU CARE ABOUT AT THE MOMENT...!
WHEN YOU'RE FEELING PLEASURE...
IT'S NO GOOD...
RAM!
I'M...
I'M GETTING HARD AGAIN...!
OH—
OH!
FUMBLE
STOP IT!
NO!
LET'S SEE...
UNNF!


YOU KNOW...
YOU REALLY DO LIKE THE DIRTY STUFF, DON'T YOU?
WHA-!
I MEAN, HERE YOU ARE, GETTING RAMMED BY ME FROM BEHIND--.
DON'T LOOK DOWN THERE!!
BUT YOU'RE ALSO RUBBING YOURSELF UP AGAINST THE SHEET!
...!
BLUSH
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
IT'S OKAY, TOO, IN ITS OWN WAY.

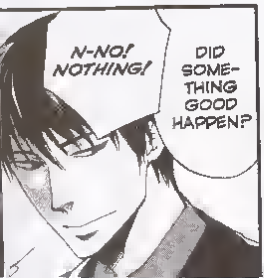
ALL THAT COMPLICATED STUFF —
JUST WORRY ABOUT 'EM AS THEY COME.
...!
YOU REALLY ARE A FLIPPANT —
SHUT UP.
NN!
SHOVE
THAT'S HOW MOST OF LIFE IS...
YOU DEAL WITH IT AS IT HAPPENS.

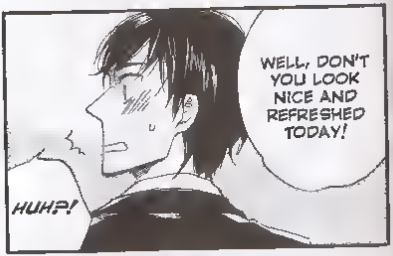
BUT ALL I WANT...
NN —
OH —
UHH!
OH —
...IS FOR YOU NOT TO HAVE TO WORRY OVER SOMEONE LIKE ME...
...!
-HAH-
...AND JUST BE FREE.
...NNF...


...AHH —...
UNNH —
...
...!
TWITCH
TWITCH
SLIP
PUSH
FLOP
WHEW—
OH MAN, THAT FELT GOOD! ♡
...
...
SNIFF
I GUESS I'M BECOMING PRETTY STUPID MYSELF...
I'M STARTING NOT TO CARE, EITHER...

GOOD MORNING!

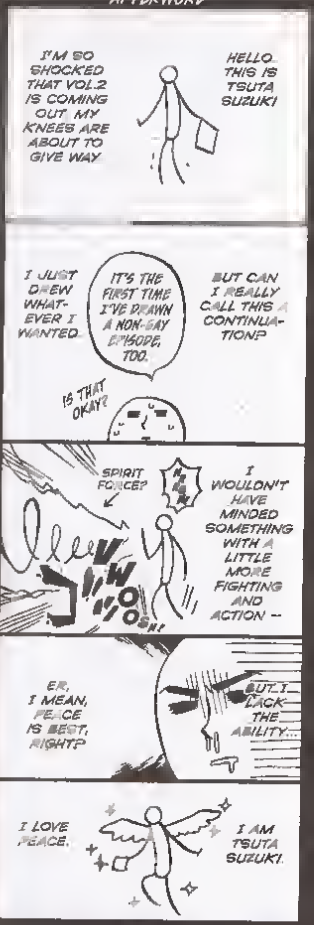
MORNING!
HUH?
...GOOD MORNING


DID SOME-THING GOOD HAPPEN?
N-NO! NOTHING!

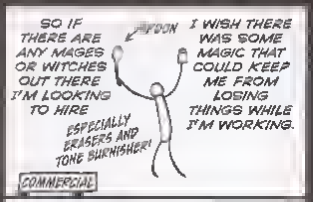

WELL, DON'T YOU LOOK NICE AND REFRESHED TODAY!
HUH?!

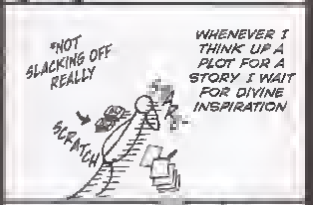
FOR WHAT?!
CONGRATS!
COME ON.. TELL ME!
SOMETHING HAPPENED, DIDN'T IT?
STOP TEASING ME FIRST THING IN THE MORNING!
WHAT DOES IT MATTER, ANYWAY?!
SETSU, WHAT'S THAT PIECE OF PAPER?
HMM? SOMEONE GAVE IT TO ME
IT'S MY TREASURE
HEH, HEH.
A STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS STORY, ACT 6 : END

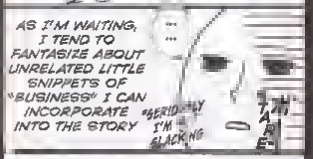
# AFTERWORD

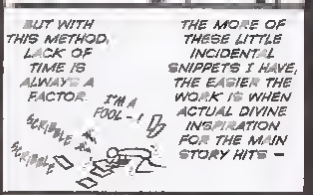

I'M SO SHOCKED THAT VOL.2 IS COMING OUT. MY KNEES ARE ABOUT TO GIVE WAY
HELLO. THIS IS TSUTA SUZUKI
I JUST DREW WHATEVER I WANTED.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE DRAWN A NON-SAY EPISODE, TOO.
BUT CAN I REALLY CALL THIS A CONTINUATION?
IS THAT OKAY?
SPIRIT FORCE?
I WOULDN'T HAVE MINDED SOMETHING WITH A LITTLE MORE FIGHTING AND ACTION --
ER, I MEAN, PEACE IS BEST, RIGHT?
BUT I LACK THE ABILITY...
I LOVE PEACE.
I AM TSUTA SUZUKI.

ESPECIALLY JAPANESE SAKE.
LATELY I'VE BEEN WORKING SO MUCH I'VE HAD NO TIME FOR DRINK..
MUMBLE..
PREVIOUSLY, I ADVOCATED THE DRINKING OF ALCOHOL.
YOU CAN JUST FEEL THE "I WANT TO DRINK SAKE" AURA EMANATING FROM THE PAGE.
I TOOK ALL MY FRUSTRATIONS AND PUT IT ALL IN THE MANGA.
I'D REALLY LIKE TO GET FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE LIQUOR STORES IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD
AND MAKE SOME SAKE CUPS, TOO.
I'D LIKE TO DRINK SOME REALLY GOOD JAPANESE SAKE
I REMEMBER THERE WAS THIS ONE TIME, SAMPLE AFTER SAMPLE WAS PUSHED ON ME —
HIT! WAIT A AND THIS IS A LOCAL SAKE
YOU CAN'T OVERLOOK THE DEPARTMENT STORE SUB-LEVELS EITHER
YOU WANT ME TO TASTE ALL OF THEM?!
POUR
WOW
DRINK BEFORE THE ACTUAL DRINKING SESSION (AT NIGHT)!
..AND I STAGGERED HOME DRUNK, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DAY
WOW
BUT IT WAS FUN, THOUGH...
STARE-


SO IF THERE ARE ANY MAGES OR WITCHES OUT THERE I'M LOOKING TO HIRE
ESPECIALLY ERASERS AND TONE BURNISHER!
I WISH THERE WAS SOME MAGIC THAT COULD KEEP ME FROM LOSING THINGS WHILE I'M WORKING.
COMMERCIAL


"NOT SLACKING OFF REALLY
SCRATCH
WHENEVER I THINK UP A PLOT FOR A STORY I WAIT FOR DIVINE INSPIRATION


AS I'M WAITING, I TEND TO FANTASIZE ABOUT UNRELATED LITTLE SNIPPETS OF "BUSINESS" I CAN INCORPORATE INTO THE STORY
...
...
"SERIOUSLY I'M SLACKING


BUT WITH THIS METHOD, LACK OF TIME IS ALWAYS A FACTOR
I'M A FOOL -!
SCRIBBLE
SCRIBBLE
THE MORE OF THESE LITTLE INCIDENTAL SNIPPETS I HAVE, THE EASIER THE WORK IS WHEN ACTUAL DIVINE INSPIRATION FOR THE MAIN STORY HITS -

IWASSAN (MY GREAT FRIEND AND ROOMMATE)
ISA-TAN
OKAWA-SAN
HAGE
TSUZUMI-CHAN (OR "A TALE OF STRANGE EXPERIENCE")
MAKI-SAN AND EVERYONE AT LIBRE PUBLISHING
REALLY, I'M SO SORRY.
THANK YOU
ANYWAY, THANK YOU ALL VERY MUCH FOR READING.

BONUS 4-FRAME

YOU THINK SO?
YOU ALWAYS TREAT DAD LIKE A LITTLE CHILD, SHINRA!
I'M SPOILING HIM
WELL, I'VE KNOWN HIM SINCE HE WAS A KID
AND NO MATTER HOW OLD THEY GET KIDS ARE STILL CUTE
O-OH... I SEE...
HM...
OOH -
A CUTIE!
BASED ON WHAT STANDARD?!

THE POINT IS JUST THAT HE WAS A CUTE CHILD!

AFTERWORD / END